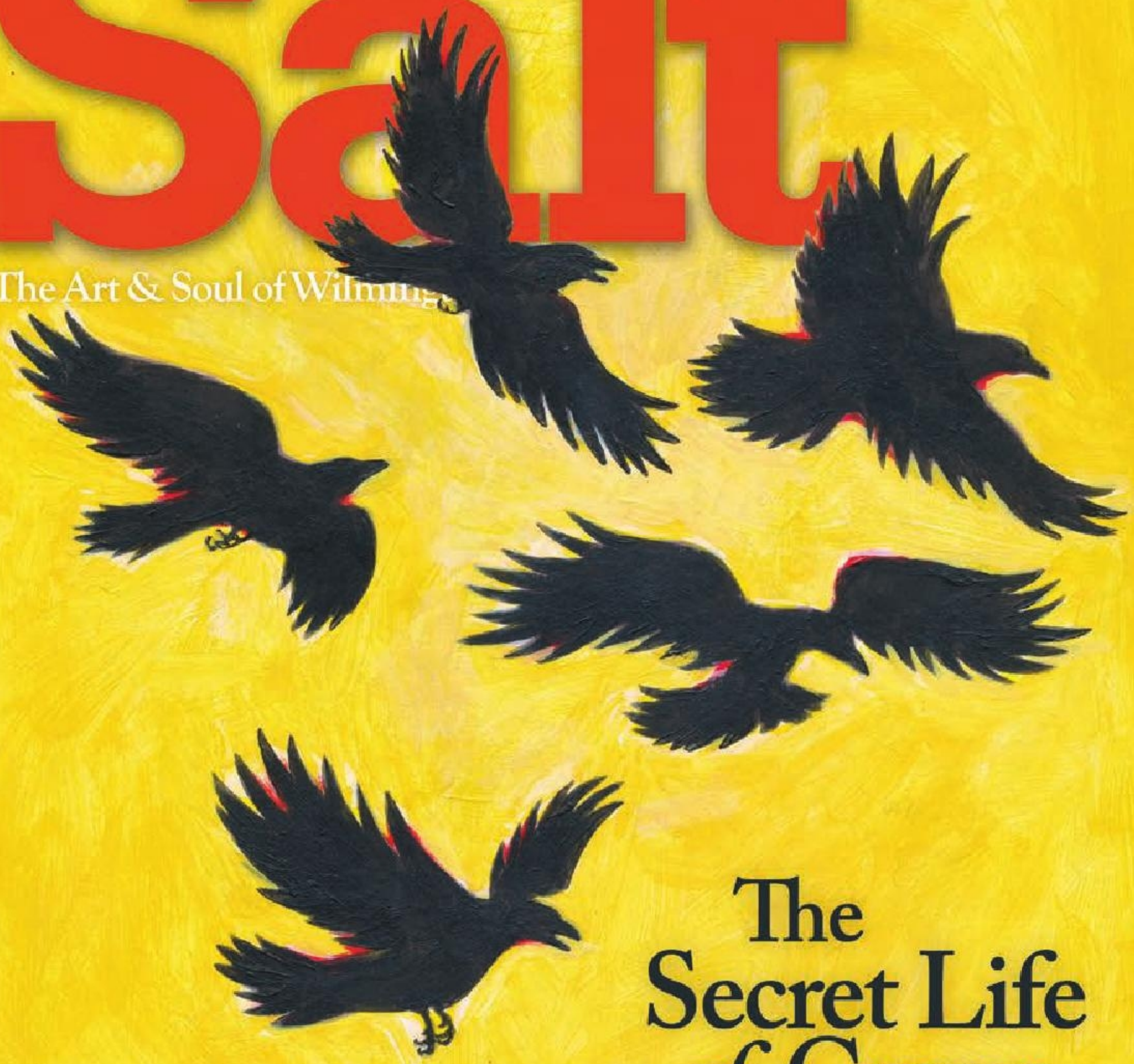
October 2015

Salt

The Art & Soul of Wilmington



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2103 Lytham Court · Landfall

Elegant, low maintenance brick patio home overlooking Landfall's Nicklaus golf course and pond. Enjoy Landfall's beauty with lots of outdoor living from the oversized screen porch to enclosed slate terrace. Upstairs are 2 bedrooms, 2 baths and a large bonus room over the 2 car garage. **$569,000**

853 Gull Point · Landfall

Located on a high wooded site in the heart of Landfall's beautiful Gull Point area, this all brick residence features an open floorplan with vaulted ceilings, great room, granite, stainless kitchen, first floor master with his and her closets. **$625,000**

8209 Bald Eagle Lane · Porters Neck Plantation

New construction by D Logan on Wilmington's sought after Bald Eagle Lane. An open floor plan features a central kitchen with granite and stainless. A luxurious first floor master suite is tucked away from the other two first floor bedrooms . **$698,500**

2225 Tattersalls · Glen Meade

Newly built in 2004, this all brick Georgian design features formal areas without the walls. Ten foot ceilings, gorgeous hardwood floors, heavy crown moldings, granite/stainless kitchen and a first floor master suite all access the covered porch with stamped concrete and outdoor fireplace...the perfect spot for fall football. **$784,000**

1427 Pembroke Jones Drive · Landfall

This updated Landfall low country design is located in Landfall's cherished first phase and offers broken views of the Pete Dye Lake. This well-kept home has 4 bedrooms/3 baths upstairs with the master suite downstairs and includes an "in-law suite" with private stairs and kitchen/living area. **$799,000**

12 B Mallard Street · Club Colony Townhomes

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17 Island Drive · Shore Acres

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380 S. Kingfisher Lane · Hampstead

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1906 London Lane · Landfall

Quality built by Old South Building, this brick low country architecture features a rocking chair front porch, an open floor plan with 10' ceiling and spacious rooms that overlook a huge pool, fenced rear yard and Landfall's Dye golf course. **$1,099,000**

1 Oyster Catcher · Figure 8 Island

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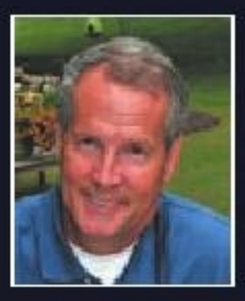

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Area Schools Directory

School Name	Focus	Grades	Enrollment	Students: Faculty	Admission Requirements	Tuition
Cape Fear Academy 3900 South College Road Wilmington, NC 28412 (910) 791-0287 www.capefearacademy.org	Cape Fear Academy is a learning community committed to discovering and developing individual potential, preparing each student for success in college and life. 100% college acceptance.	PK3-12th	600	9:1	Acceptance based on application, academic and citizenship record, admission test scores, and teacher recommendations.	$9,960-$16,435
First Presbyterian Church Preschool & Kindergarden 125 South Third Street Wilmington, NC 28401 (910) 762-2066 www.firstonthird.org	The school allows each child to develop at their own rate. The curriculum encourages self-esteem, independence, creativity and curiosity in a loving, nurturing Christian environment. Tennis, dance, soccer, fitness, yoga, art and basketball are after school activities offered.	6 months-Kindergarden	160	1:4-1:8	Admission is open to all students. Child must be of required age by August 31 of the current school year. Call the Director for more information and to see the school. Current Immunization is a requirement.	$195-$365 (per month) depending on days and ages
Friends School of Wilmington 207 Pine Grove Drive Wilmington, NC 28403 (910) 791-8221 www.fsow.org	Montessori preschool and inquiry-based elementary/middle school. Small classes, vigorous academics, integrated technology. Enrichment program includes art, music, foreign language and athletics.	18 months -8th grade	180	8:1	Varies per grade but includes: application, drawing/writing sample or student questionnaire, teacher recommendation form, transcripts, classroom visit and developmental assessment.	$5,765-$11,450
New Horizons Elementary 3705 South College Road Wilmington, NC 28412 (910) 392-5209 www.newhorizonselementary.org	Provides a nurturing environment promoting student achievement and personal development through a whole child approach. Small classes ensure personal attention for every student. Engaging lessons, inquiry-based projects, and technology are infused into a challenging curriculum that promotes critical thinking, independent learning, and leadership.	K-5th	80	12:1	Admission is open to all qualified students based on academic record, teacher recommendations, and classroom visit.	$7,812-$8,558
St. Mary Catholic School 217 South 4th Street Wilmington, NC 28401 (910) 762-5491 www.thestmaryschool.org	Catholic Christian school emphasizing critical thinking skills, reasoning and the Christian call to service. Offers exceptional fine arts program, sports, enhanced technology, extra-curricular activities and weekly Mass celebration.	PreK-8th	235	10:1	Submission of current and prior report cards and EOG test results, birth certificate, prospective student form and evaluation form completed by former Principal.	$2,830 (PreK) $5,370-$6,600 (K-8th)
Wilmington Academy of Arts & Sciences 6201 Myrtle Grove Road Wilmington, NC 28409 (910) 392-3139 www.wilmingtonacademy.org	Provides a challenging and nurturing environment for gifted/highly motivated learners in grades 4-8. Certified teachers use research based strategies and updated technology to enhance instruction and engage students in current, relevant learning opportunities.	4th-8th	70	17:1	Based on student's academic foundation, motivation and desire to succeed, all measured by teacher recommendations, ITBS scores, parent essay, report cards and shadowing experience at WAAS.	$8,900
Wilmington Christian Academy 1401 North College Road Wilmington, NC 28405 (910) 791-4248 www.wilmingtonchristian.com	Wilmington Christian Academy prepares students for future success by providing a comprehensive education consisting of Christian faith instruction, excellent academics, athletics, fine arts and community service.	Preschool -12th	795	21:1	Basic requirements include an application, an on-campus interview, student records and placement testing for K5-12.	$158 weekly (PreK 3 & 4) $5,210 (K5-5) $5,430 (6-12)

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October 2015

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a room with MY point of view

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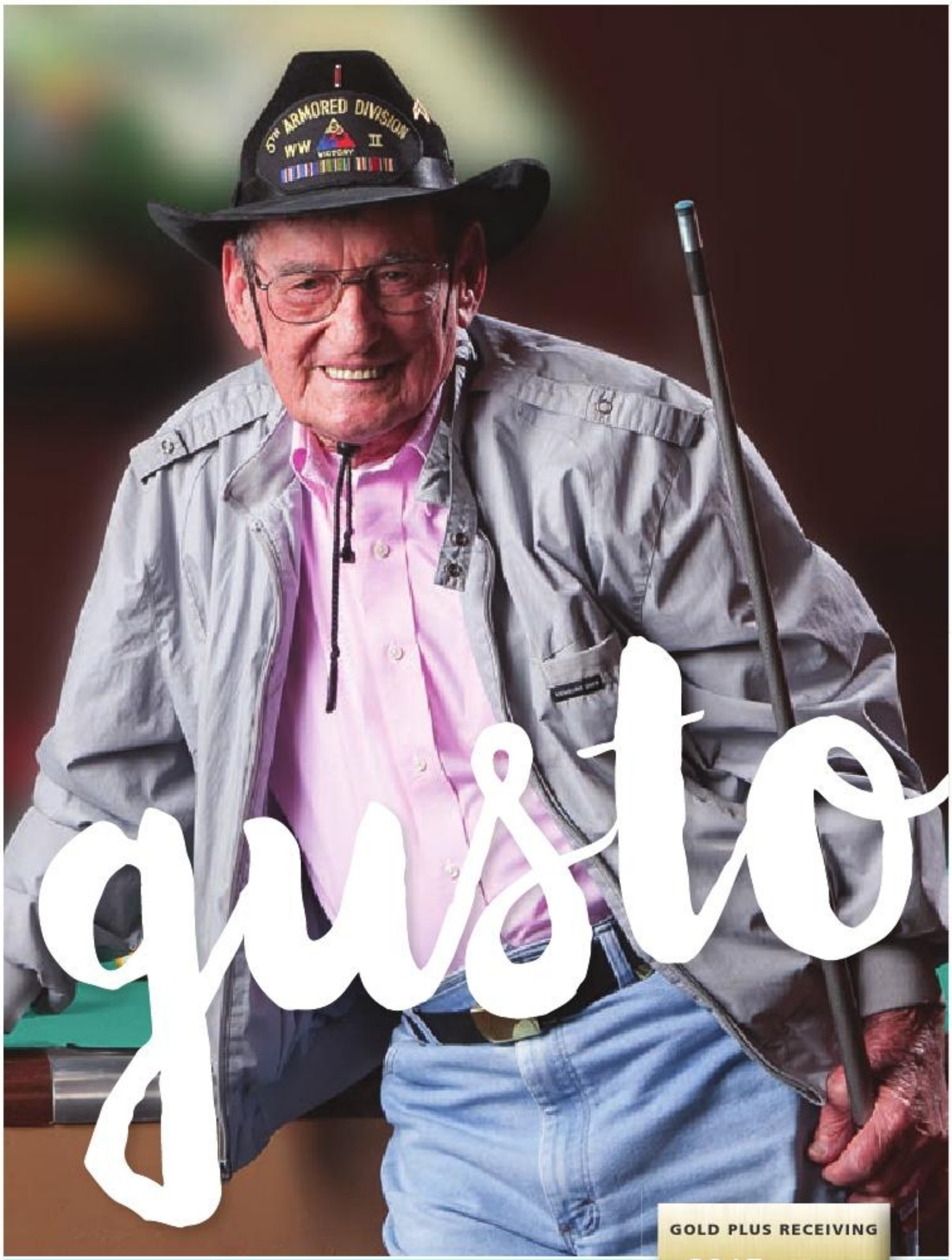

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Salt
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VOLUME 3, NO. 10

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2525 Canterbury Road — Oleander Estates

Well maintained, custom built home situated on a tree-lined street in sought after South Oleander. On almost ¾ of an acre, this property offers lush landscaping and plenty of yard for kids to play. Enter into the marble floored foyer, then into the formal living room with custom built-in cabinets/bookshelves. The oversized dining room will seat 12 comfortably. The kitchen offers plenty of cabinet and counter space, and a large family dining area, off of which is a separate laundry/mud room. Also on the main floor is a spacious family room with fireplace and more custom built-in cabinets/bookcases. The covered back porch is the perfect place to relax, overlooking your secluded back yard surrounded by hardwoods. Upstairs, the master suite offers dressing area, walk-in closet and tiled bath. 3 more bedrooms, another tiled bath, and home office complete this perfect home. This property is located near Cape Fear Country Club, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Alderman Elementary, downtown, and shopping. **$439,900**

New Listing

2516 Canterbury Road — Oleander Estates

This home offers an open, flowing floorplan & high ceilings throughout the main living areas. Spacious formal rooms and a bright, airy family room and breakfast room that open to the patio and private backyard with beautiful flowering plants, making this a perfect home for entertaining. Situated on an oak lined street in sought after South Oleander, this 4 bedroom 3.5 bath brick home offers over 3500 sq. ft. all on 1 level. It sits on a ¾+ acre lot complimented by mature, lush landscaping that is garden tour worthy-abounding in azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas, crepe myrtles, and so much more. Other features include 2 new heat pumps, a new roof and ample storage in the many closets, large laundry room, and workshop and utility room off of the carport. This property is located near Cape Fear Country Club, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Alderman Elementary, downtown, and shopping. **$399,900**

Reduced

1542 Magnolia Place — Magnolia Place/Oleander

This home sits at the end of an oak lined quiet cul-de-sac with side yard overlooking the 10th fairway of Cape Fear Country Club's golf course. This 3 bedroom, 3 bath home offers all formal areas plus sunroom, a cozy den and breakfast room, and a separate children's suite upstairs with bedroom, full bath and huge playroom. It is within walking distance of Cape Fear Country Club and is close to New Hanover Regional Medical Center, downtown, and shopping and dining. **$329,900**

New Listing

521 South 3rd Street — Historic District

This classic bungalow is a hidden gem of the Historic District. Nestled beneath sprawling crepe myrtles, this 1880s bungalow has been lovingly restored and updated. This 3 bedroom, 3 full bath home offers hardwood floors throughout, high ceilings, spacious kitchen, all formal areas, an airy sunroom overlooking secluded brick courtyard and a new 30 year roof. Property is currently a residence but zoning "MSMU" allows office or commercial use per city codes. Vacant lot behind home that faces Castle Street may be purchased separately. **$319,900**

6100 Murrayville Road

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Old Things

By Jim Dodson

Not long ago, I sent out an old club chair from my office to be recovered.

Some of my colleagues at the magazine were greatly amused by this act, pointing out that the town dump was a more fitting destination than a fine reupholstery shop.

For years they'd made high sport of my uncommon devotion to this old chair, you see, though probably not for no good reason.

Half its springs were shot and its cushion sagged almost to the floor in places, prompting me to lovingly nickname it "the Chair of No Return," warning any unwary sitters of injuries that could occur from attempting to rise from it. Our clever art director, Andie Rose, insensitively took to calling it "Chairy" after Pee-wee Herman's peculiar talking armchair. The CNR and I were both wounded by this.

Still, how I loved that old armchair, secretly hoping the upholsterer might return it with a new lease on life.

Crusty Mildred Horseman, after all, gave me this chair the summer before my junior year in college, my first piece of actual grown-up furniture. She lived across the street from my parents in Greensboro. Even then the old thing was something of an antique, the chair I mean to say, having belonged to her late husband, Clyde, from *his* college days in Michigan, evidenced by its original faded green leather worn by decades of service.

I carted it off to my first big job in Atlanta, where it received its first re-upholstering job, a nice updated green hunter plaid like the one I'd recently seen in a sitting room of the swanky Piedmont Driving Club. I thought it looked terribly sophisticated, even if I wasn't.

Seven years later the CNR accompanied me to a new life and job in a rented U-Haul truck to a solar house by the Green River in Vermont, followed a year later to a cottage in a New Hampshire apple orchard, thence to a weathered bungalow in the salt marsh of Essex, Massachusetts — and finally, to the rugged post and beam house my young bride and I built on a forested hilltop near the coast of Maine.

By then the CNR had seen its better days, with a seat cushion woefully sagging, soon to be relegated to my upstairs home office in the barn, safely out of view. Still, the old thing was my seat of choice, the place where I preferred to sit when I wrote essays or read books to my small children.

I thought that might be the final resting place for us both, to tell the truth.

But life had other plans. A decade later, following divorce and remarriage, the old armchair came home with me to the South and wound up in my magazine office, the source of great mirth to my staff.

Still, what is it about a few old things that have a way of wrapping their vines around the human heart and are spiritually endowed with a deep personal meaning?

Maybe it's the fact that their bittersweet impermanence mirrors our own and they may well outlive us in the race to the boneyard.

Artists and poets seem to understand this intuitively. Not long ago I saw a magnificent iron elk made from rusted auto parts standing beside the highway. What a thing of salvaged beauty it was, a mythic tribute to nature and General Motors. I stopped and snapped a photo, wishing I could somehow cart it home to my front lawn.

Such acts are in our national DNA. In the days before every rural family possessed a camera, quilts were made from worn-out clothing and household items for warmth and frugality — but also to record a family's passage through time, *scraps that speak*, as my late Grandmother Taylor liked to say of her own humble quilts. They reminded her of people she'd known in her life, and how far she'd journeyed, a story behind each square of cloth. *If you love it enough*, said George Washington Carver, *anything will speak to you.*

Tony Avent, the nationally known horticultural guru and owner of Plant Delights Nursery, uses old bathroom fixtures and other household items that have outlived their usefulness as stage props along the paths of his magnificent botanical garden built in an old tobacco farm outside of Raleigh, perhaps reminding us how nature will have the last word in a throw-away consumer culture. Somehow, though, those fixtures make the garden look like an enchanted Lost World of treasures both natural and man-made.

Though I'm not much of a collector of anything save pocket lint, golf caps

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and old books, my home office has become a kind of accidental collection center for old things that speak to me and probably nobody else. On my desk stands a handsome Colonial blue-coat soldier, a ceramic lamp from the 1950s, remarkably like the one I had as a little kid but disappeared many years ago.

My grandfather's old squirrel rifle stands over in the corner — unfired for decades — next to a shelf of old books that belonged to my late father, including first editions of Kipling's *Phantom Rickshaw*, James Hilton's *Lost Horizons* and *Markings* by Dag Hammarskjöld, three of his favorite books. And now mine.

I also have my dad's old Wilson golf clubs and the green cap he purchased on his last trip to St Andrews, relics only a golfing son could deem priceless.

The oldest bed in our house is a handsome pineapple four-poster made from solid cherry hardwood that reportedly belonged to my great grandmother. For a time my daughter had it in her Brooklyn apartment until a side rail split, and I drove all the way to Brooklyn just to haul it home. I fully intend to find a craftsman who can repair it.

My wife cherishes several antique china cups and saucers, the only items her immigrant grandmother brought with her on the boat from Ireland a century ago. In her bathroom sits a large glass ginger jar filled with beautiful sea shells she's collected from every beach she's visited since girlhood, a spiritual record of her footprints in the sand.

The actual oldest object in our possession is a long farm table I gave my second wife on the occasion of our marriage. It came from England with papers certifying it to be more than 200 years old. Oh, the life that simple dented and scarred table has seen, outliving kings and empires, made smooth by unknown hands and time — including two decades of rowdy Dodson family dinners, comprising a mere fraction of its working life. We're simply its caretakers before its onward journey continues.

Not long ago that table accompanied us back to a rambling old house where we previously lived for six years. It's a relic from the Gilded Age, at least a century old, with foot-thick plaster walls and ancient plumbing, windows that leak cold like a sieve and peculiar half-sized doors and back passageways meant for servants that disappeared half a century ago.

For what it's worth, I wrote three books in an upper bedroom of this old place. The room has superb light and a powerful serenity I can feel in my bones. Moving back to it after a year away was like coming home to an old friend, a deep comfort in the wake of an unsettling time.

During the move, in an effort to begin downsizing our possessions, we made stacks of clothes for Goodwill and set aside household items we have no further need of, and even went through several dusty boxes containing old kids' toys and books, scores of dolls and once-beloved stuffed animals, broken train sets, Matchbox cars, photos and other sweet artifacts of a family all grown up, deciding to fill one large foot locker for each of our grown children to go through when they come for the holidays.

As for my old friend the Chair of No Return, it eventually returned from a talented Mexican upholsterer with new springs and a firm seat cushion and a voluptuous houndstooth fabric that made it look like a showroom chair. My formerly amused colleagues were all a bit stunned by the transformation, eager to take a turn placing their bottoms in it.

Truthfully, they seemed a trifle put out with me for taking the CNR home to the upper bedroom where I do my best work. But I'm no fool. Time is passing quickly, and a good reading chair belongs in a peaceful old room where it can do the most good.

That old chair and the table downstairs will likely outlive us all. Ditto my bride's Irish china and her collection from the sea.

But therein lies a powerful message for those of us who choose to love a few old things in a perishable universe. Eternity resides in every moment. Best to take notice and love them well before we all have to go.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com.

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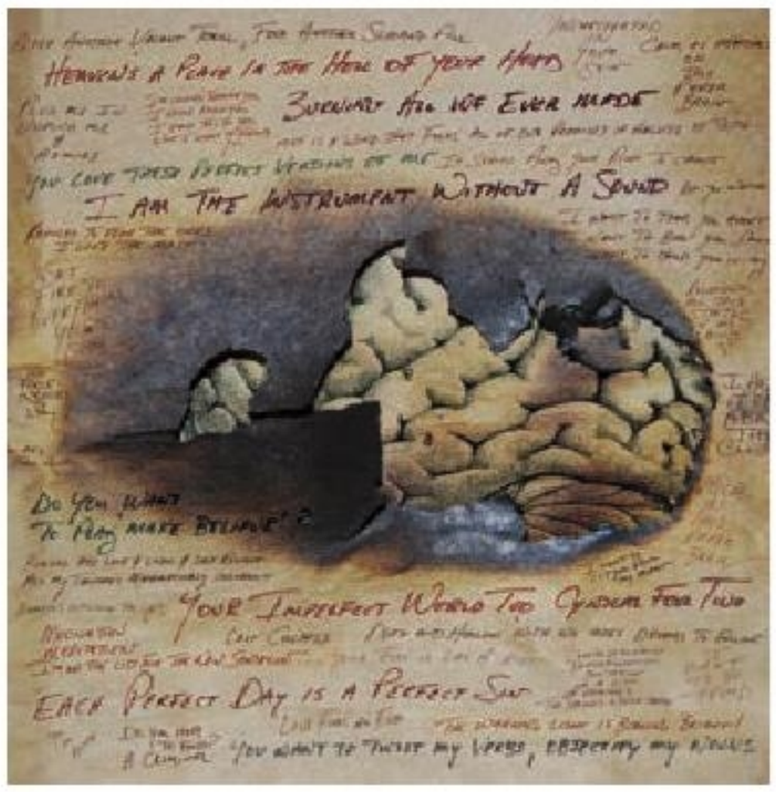
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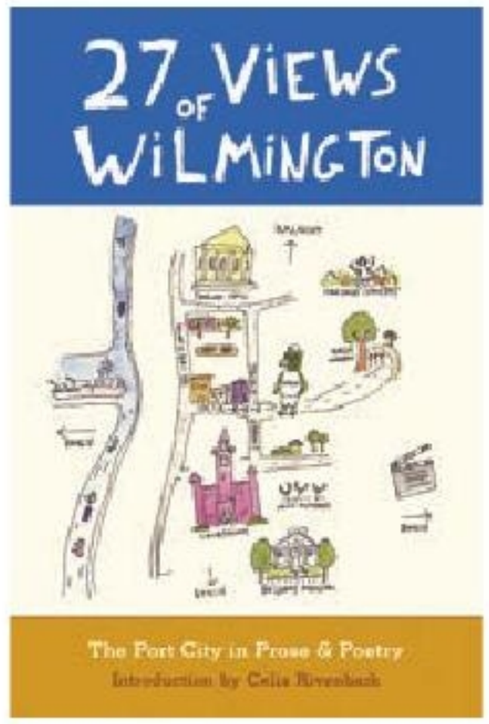
Each Perfect Day Is A Perfect Sin
You Want To Taste My Words, Feed On My Kisses

Tuesday, September 29, marked the global digital release of Wilmington musician and songwriter Thom Kunz's *Paper Brain*, a community-driven experimental rock album featuring various area musicians. Kunz cast five diverse female lead vocalists and reached out to a handful of local musicians and friends to help breathe life into his vision. *Salt* contributor and best-selling novelist Clyde Edgerton even offers a heartfelt banjo track on one of the songs. Recorded over several months in a historic house built circa 1850, the album is described as "atmospheric industrial hard rock fused with synth pop, electronica, acoustic folk and musical theater." Worth checking out. Info: thomkunz.com.

Brand Spanking New

Cape Fear Community College has announced its inaugural performance season at the brand new Humanities and Fine Arts Center, which opens Saturday, October 3, with a black-tie gala featuring the legendary Liza Minnelli and the North Carolina Symphony. The N.C. Symphony opens their official season at the Center with a "Russian Spectacular" performance on Sunday, October 4, and the Center's "Broadway Series" opens October 5–6 as NETworks presents Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, the first of three touring Broadway shows to be held this season. Opening week wraps up on Saturday, October 10, with "Artsplosion!," a free festival featuring performances from various community arts groups on the main stage plus an eccentric musical performance by Squonk Opera in the Center's outdoor courtyard. Boz Scaggs performs on Wednesday, October 28, and the shows go on and on. CFCC Humanities and Fine Arts Center, 701 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: cfcc.edu/capefearstage.

The View From Here



This month, Eno Publishers will release *27 Views of Wilmington*, a hometown anthology that features the prose and poetry of resident fiction and nonfiction writers. As if the imaginative cover illustrated by North Carolina author Daniel Wallace (*Big Fish*) isn't reason enough to pick the book up, check out the list of contributors, several of whom you've come to know in the pages of *Salt*. Among the voices: Susan T. Block, Wiley Cash, Jason Frye, Nan Graham, Virginia Holman, Gwenyfar Rohler, Dana Sachs and Ashley Wahl. You'll know others, too. Like Celia Rivenbark, whose comedic introduction to the book includes a personal anecdote that will make you think twice about your next backseat karaoke jam, especially if you're parked in front of a downtown Wilmington radio station and are within eyeshot of the DJ. In Eno's executive director Elizabeth Woodman's words: "This local anthology offers a literary landscape of Wilmington that spans generations, ethnicities, life experiences, genres to create a sense of place, the spirit of place that, we hope, will reinforce, inform, and possibly inspire more views." Book launch to be held at Pomegranate Books on Saturday, October 24, 2 p.m. Includes a fast-paced *27 Views* slam followed by a signing. Pomegranate Books, 4418 Park Avenue, Wilmington. Info: www.pombooks.net.

The "Y" Factor

The thing about Opera House Theatre Company's upcoming beauty pageant is that every contestant has the "Y" factor — be it a chromosome or the kind of show-stopping talent that gets a fellow crowned. On Saturday, October 24, at 8 p.m., the sixth annual Womanless Beauty Pageant includes evening gown and talent competitions, and a pageant interview sure to put some color in your cheeks. Mistress of Ceremonies Heather Setzler returns for this don't-miss-it Opera House fundraiser that spells fab. Tickets: $25. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-4234 or www.operahousetheatrecompany.net.

How Sweet the Hounds

Here's one for the whole family: Canines for Service's Amazing Race. On Saturday, October 10, at 11 a.m., teams will race to locate ten mystery destinations throughout New Hanover County, complete various "challenges," then race to the finish line. Team opportunities: Squardon (two to six people traveling in one vehicle; $45/person); Family (two adults and two children age 15 or younger; $100/team); Mom/Dad & Me (one adult and one child age 15 or younger; $60/team). Clues provided day of event; prizes awarded to the first team to finish in each category. Hosted by Mission BBQ. Proceeds benefit Canines for Service. Register: www.caninesforservice.org.

Let There be Lighters

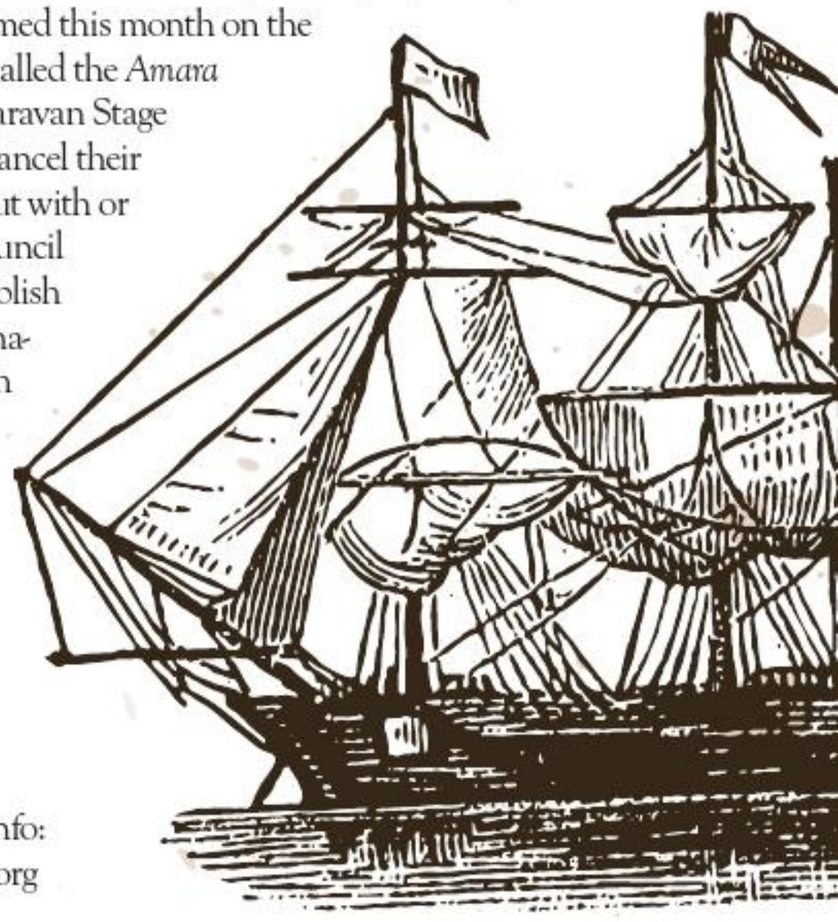
On page 40, *Salt* contributor Virginia Holman writes of "a forest borne of fire" — the sprawling Southern wilderness of longleaf pines that once spanned nearly 150,000 square miles. She also writes of the Nature Conservancy's efforts to restore it, and of tagging along on a recent controlled burn in Pender County. Without prescribed burning, longleaf pines across the region would continue to disappear. Learn more on Saturday, October 17, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the second annual Fire in the Pines Festival at Halyburton Park, an educational event that features a controlled burn, raptor show, kids' crafts and face painting, live music, food trucks (Vittles and PT's) and more. Event sponsored by the City of Wilmington's Parks and Recreation Division, the N.C. Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: www.fireinthepines.org.

A Night to Remember

Thalian Association's Youth Theatre season opens with *West Side Story* on Friday, October 9, at 7 p.m., with weekend shows running through October 18 (Sunday matinees at 3 p.m.). Think Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* transported to modern-day New York City — one of the most innovative, heart-wrenching and relevant musical dramas of our time. This production is dedicated to the memory of Joshua Proutey, the young man who was murdered after leaving his job as night manager at the Hannah Block Historic USO/Community Arts Center in December 2012. (Visit www.journey4josh.org to see how Joshua's mother, Patty Proutey, chose to channel her grief into a vessel for good by creating a foundation to help prevent future tragedies by giving at-risk children an opportunity to experience positive activities that show them a pathway to a better future.) Tickets: $12. Second Street Stage, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-7860 or www.thalian.org.

Fair Seas and Following Winds

Last month, the Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County advertised *Hacked . . . The Treasure of the Empire!*, an experimental opera to be performed this month on the deck of a 90-foot-tall ship called the *Amara Zee*. Unfortunately, the Caravan Stage Tall Ship Theatre had to cancel their Wilmington tour dates, but with or without ship, the Arts Council continuously helps to establish the region as an arts destination. Case in point: Fourth Friday Gallery Nights. On Friday, October 23, from 6–9 p.m., embark upon your own salty voyage at this free monthly event where downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public. Anchors aweigh! Info: artscouncilofwilmington.org



Fun Fact

A North Carolina Highway Historical Marker will be unveiled and dedicated at Wrightsville Beach on Sunday, October 18, at 12 p.m., in conjunction with the 2015 Wrightsville Beach Museum Waterman Hall of Fame Inductions. The marker recognizes Wrightsville Beach for Pioneer East Coast Surfing, acknowledging historically documented and organized surfing activity at Wrightsville in 1909. Should you go, be sure to shake hands with surfing historian and author J. Skipper Funderburg, who started applying for the marker two years ago. And if you ask him what it was like to see Governor Pat McCrory's signature on the official document that proclaimed September, 2015, as "Surfing Month" in North Carolina, see if he doesn't describe the experience as "something we can all be proud of." Corner of Waynick Boulevard and Bridgers Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or wbmuseumofhistory.com.

Fleet-Footed

Saturday, October 17, 6–10 p.m., marks the return of YachtVenture, the glamorous Children's Museum fundraiser modeled after a popular social event that used to draw superyacht owners from the world over to the French Riviera year after year. YachtVenture is an over-the-top evening that combines luxury yachts with live music (L Shape Lot), savory catering (Sawmill), cocktail attire and an open bar. Stroll the docks, explore the yachts and relish the extravagance. Tickets: $100. All proceeds go to the Children's Museum of Wilmington. See website for raffle and auction details. MarineMax, 130 Short Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.yachtventure.org.

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Salt

Instagram contest!

Top 4 winners will be published in the November issue

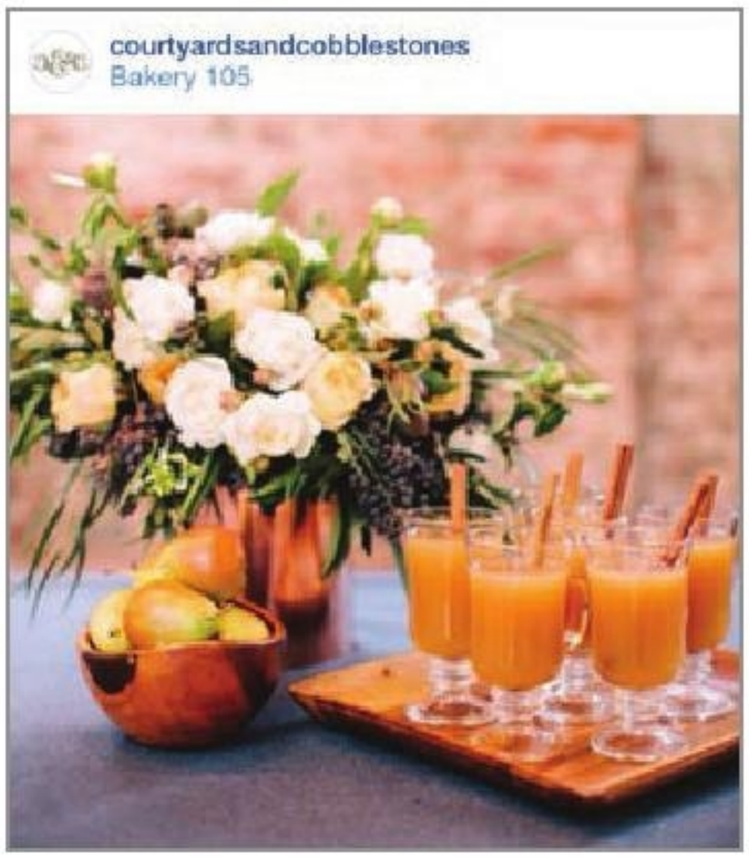
This month's theme:

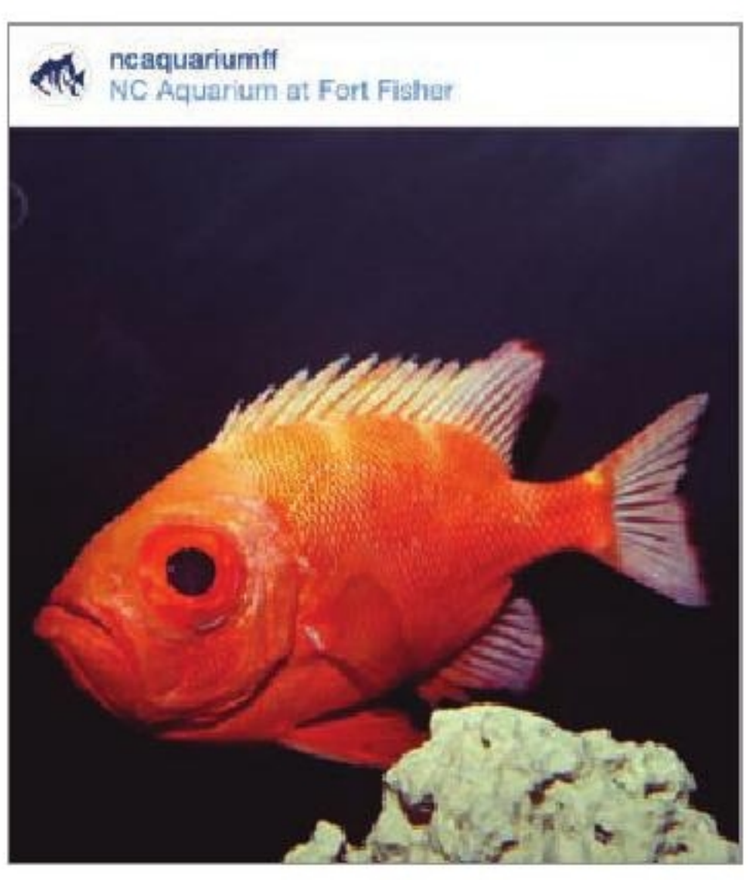
Orange

We heard orange is the new black. What's your favorite shade?

Tag your photos with #saltmaginstacontest to enter

Submissions needed by Tuesday, October 13.





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The Busy Bees Out Back

And the sweet bounty that produced in an idle garden

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASHLEY WAHL

Last winter, in the process of settling into our Devon Park rental, Josh and I binge-watched past episodes of *Game of Thrones* until the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros became more familiar to us than the piebald gypsy cat sprawled beneath the pecan trees in our backyard.

During those nights of war and duplicity, adventure and plot twists, direwolves and fire-breathing dragons, I couldn't help but wonder what we might accomplish if we were harnessing our time into more productive hobbies. But we were set on starting season five with the rest of the fantasy-loving universe and, let's be candid, one of us was set on Jon Snow.

Season five premiered on a Sunday in April, and as the days stretched out like the neighbor's cat (by now she had wandered to the cluster of dogwoods), we began to notice signs of spring. Namely, our lawn was ablaze with dandelions.

And so it was on a sunny weekday evening when, no show to distract us, we unlocked the shed to retrieve the push mower. What we discovered was the entrance to a tiny, well-oiled kingdom every bit as magical as Westeros. And it was much more civil. When the hinge door swung open, a small army of honeybees trickled out from under the shack through a crack in the front wall to greet us. No threats of war, but they made it known we were in their realm. We cut the weeds, put back the mower, and left the guards to tend their kingdom.

**

Most people know that the queen bee is essential to the life of the hive. Ours was as prolific as the dandelions. By June, each time we opened the shed for the mower, a growing mass of workers fled from their chamber like the Night's Watch defending Castle Black. Not wanting to further disturb them, we'd leave the door open until nightfall, giving them time to settle down. No stings. No Valyrian steel sword fights. But the arrangement was less than ideal.

Beyond the shed wall, we figured, there must have been a couple of hundred of them, a healthy bunch of pollinators whose role in the cosmos is every bit as important as ours.

We needed a mediator. Raid wasn't in our lexicon.

**

Our finale aired in August, long after *GOT*'s, when local sculptor Justin Campbell and his apiarist brother appeared in our yard wearing white bee suits.

Matthieu Campbell, 34, keeps backyard bees in Chapel Hill, where he owns a construction business that specializes in historic restoration. When Justin told him about our wild honeys, Matthieu offered to come get them.

"I think it's a shame that most people would just spray and kill them," said Mattheiu, who used a smoker to mellow the bees before vacuuming them out from under the shed and depositing them into a wooden beehive box. Justin helped him harvest honeycomb from the space between the floor joists — enough to fill fifteen frames — then, still wearing his net veil mask, captured some intimate shots of the bees with his camera phone. We watched.

"They're incredible," said the 30-year-old artist known for his visceral bronze castings that often illustrate his attraction to misunderstood wildlife. "I don't blame people for being brought up to view bees as aggressive evil little creatures, but the truth is quite the opposite. Knowledge is the enemy of fear."

When Justin showed us images of the gold mine our bees had been working on for the past several months — forty pounds of the tastiest honey ever to have passed my lips — we were wonderstruck.

"There must be 50,000 of them," said Matthieu, who gave the bees a couple of days to reassemble before transporting their kingdom to Chapel Hill. "Our hope is that we've captured the queen."

**

Native Americans believed that when an animal crosses your path, it brings a message. When thousands of honeybees are feeding their queen royal jelly beneath your shed floor, you listen.

Magic surrounds us, even when we cannot see it.
Hard work reaps sweet rewards.
Watch less GOT?

Two weeks after the extraction, Matthieu informed us that the bees were busy repairing the combs taken from their original hive.

"They have also drawn out several new combs, so that shows they are very healthy," he said.

He also found the queen.

"This one fact alone means that they will probably make it," he told us. And as we talked about the secret life of bees — how they're each a part of this "whole little world that's so highly organized and productive" — I felt half-inclined to sell the couch.

What's the yard cat trying to tell us?

As it turns out, the New Hanover County Beekeepers Association has a swarm removal list that helps connect people with nearby experts who save honeybees. For more information, or to learn about NHCBA's monthly meetings, visit nhcbeekeepers.org/links.shtml.

Our spy, senior editor Ashley Wahl, is prone to wander.

The Fake Brothers

A pair of talented young veterans of the Port City's theater scene launch an ambitious new weekly adventure

By Gwenyfar Rohler

"I don't think it matters, the 'I's' or the 'we's,'" muses Caylan Mckay. "We both have the same goals for Fake Brothers — though we have different end goals for ourselves." He looks at his collaborator, Patrick Basquill, who nods and grins as Mckay begins to explain their hopes for the newly formed film and performance company.

Perhaps "newly formed" is a bit of a misnomer. Maybe "newly legitimized with a corporate tax number" would be a more accurate description. I remember seeing them perform under the moniker four years ago for Improv Night at the former Nutt Street Comedy Room. The long-form improv piece began with blowing up a filing cabinet and ended with Mckay marrying a chicken. Somehow it was believable that these two crazy teenagers would do this, and as an audience member it was so captivating you just didn't want it to end. Now they are launching a weekly show, "Fake Brothers Presents," on Thursday nights, 7 p.m., at City Stage.

Even though they are both less than a quarter of a century old, Mckay and Basquill are veterans of Wilmington's theater scene. Seriously. To say they grew up in children's theater here is an understatement. They cite *The Wizard of Oz* as the forming of their partnership: Basquill messed up a scene change and Mckay came to his rescue onstage. They've been virtually inseparable ever since, with Fake Brothers emerging organically from their collaborations. Not to say that they are not real brothers — though the duo notes that the relationship fulfills brotherly needs they both have. Mckay, as the youngest member of his family, gets a chance to pass on his accumulated wisdom in the guise of an older brother, and Basquill, the oldest sibling in his family, enjoys having an older brother for a change.

"When we do a show we don't just do a sketch show, we don't just do an improv show, we don't just show one of our movies. We kind of try to involve everything — and make this into a giant event more than anything!" Mckay grins and Basquill nods in agreement again. Together they are a study in contrasts: McKay is the classic "dark and handsome" and speaks in direct, specific terms about goals and action steps. Basquill's sandy blond hair and baby-faced grin will let him play the young romantic lead for many more years — which is part of what Wilmington audiences know him for: an

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

amazing rock 'n' roll singing voice and the onstage charisma to carry the part of a young male lead. But a little over a year ago, Basquill confided to me that he was shifting gears to focus more on film. Now that Fake Brothers has finished two short films and is fundraising for a feature-length production in addition to launching their regular stage performance, it sounds like the two young men have found the perfect outlet not only for a tremendous amount of creative energy, but also to apply two lifetimes of learning their craft. Most important lesson: Film and theater are collaborative, not solitary pursuits.

"We actually had a disagreement about something the other evening. It was like 'Whoa! This is really intense!'" Mckay looks at Basquill, a mixture of confusion and awe on his face, and

Most important lesson: Film and theater are collaborative, not solitary pursuits.

continues. "But when it was over we were able to value each other's opinion." The duo goes on to describe the process of learning to be able to give and accept feedback about writing and performing without taking criticism personally — but rather applying it to improve the work. A shocking moment? The table read of their first draft for the short that became *For a Good Time Call*. At the end of the read, the Fake Brothers were startled to hear suggestions like, "Well, this could be a good experimental comedy . . ."

"It was like, 'Uh . . . no . . . that's going back in the drawer.'" Basquill recalled. A year and a half later they had rewritten the script to a point that it was ready for the camera. It was a tough but necessary course adjustment that led to a stranger, tighter script. Besides the regular multi-media stage show at City Stage, Fake Brothers is getting ready for production on their feature-length work and trying to get as much accomplished as they can. Mckay is quick to point out that eventually adulthood will set in, with him working as an accountant and perusing art with Basquill on his vacation time, while Basquill is preparing to leap to a bigger city. Basquill grins and notes that the time he spent recently in Chicago at Second City was eye-opening for him; the structure of writing and producing came together in ways that clicked. "To perform and create as much as possible," Basquill sums it up. "I just want to play as much as this town will let us."

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

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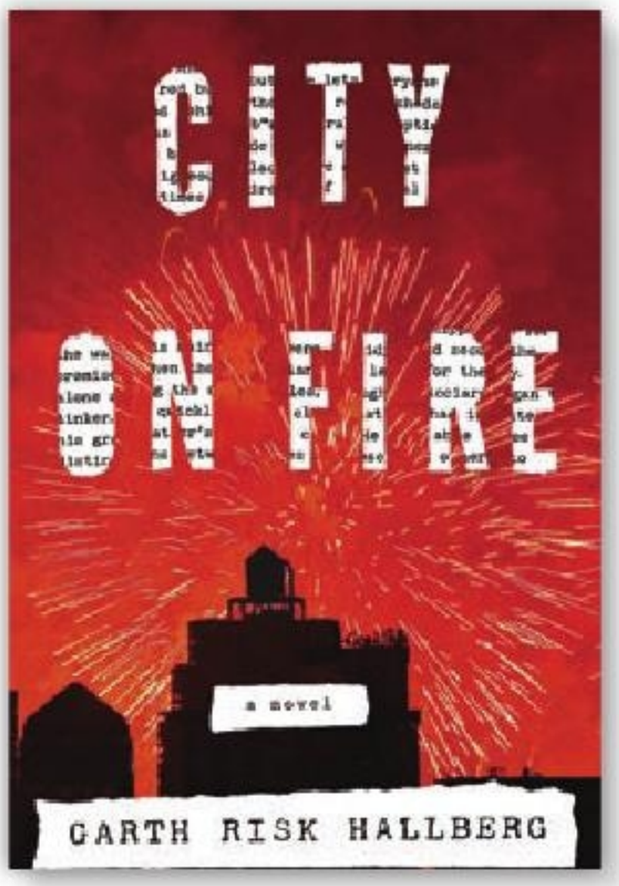
Heavy Reading

A remarkable first novel reveals 70s-era New York City like nothing before it, 900 pages worthy of Gotham itself

By Brian Lampkin



I put Garth Risk Hallberg's novel City On Fire (Knopf, 2015, $30), on the bathroom scale: 5 lbs, 6 ozs. And that's the paperback Advance Reader Copy [this is capped in the trade and often referred to as ARC]; the hardcover, when it's launched in mid-October, might top 7 lbs. That's a heavy book. At more than 900 pages, *City On Fire* is also an unlikely first novel. First novels are often slim like Saul Bellow's *Dangling Man* or Dostoyevsky's *Poor Folk* or Samuel Delany's *The Jewels of Aptor* (all of whom went on to write which were precursors to massive novels of their own). It takes time to grow into a writer who can carry a novel for nearly 1,000 pages.

But at age 34, Hallberg is older than most first-time novelists. And suddenly wealthier. As reported in *The New York Times* nearly two years ago, Hallberg received a $2 million advance for *City On Fire*. (I expect a number of you who immediately are, at this moment, putting down this review to get busy on your own novel tomes.) Thar's gold in them thar hills words. Relax, prospectors, Hallberg's contract was news because it was so unheard of. Nobody gets $2 million for a first book. Except Hallberg.

It's entirely unfair to saddle Hallberg with the expectations such a windfall demands, but you do want to know why this book? Why this writer? What is it about *City On Fire* that had the rights sold to sixteen different countries a year before publication? And who is going to star in the inevitable film or eight-episode mini-series?

Only a sour, failed writer would begrudge Hallberg his money, so let's not fall into that pit of despair. Let's try to judge this book on its own without the bags of money hanging from it. First, it's a giant realist novel of the kind once thought dead in America. It's set, mostly, in 1970s New York City at the height of the perceived failure of the great city. Default, crime, heroin, blackouts. Going through customs in New York City Gotham recently, I was holding *City On Fire* (because it wouldn't fit in my carry-on), and the customs officer asked me about the book. It was an unlikely bit of curiosity, but I told him the rough outline of '70s-era NYC.

"Ah, it's going that way again," he said, "With all that's going on and the police feeling disrespected and not doing their job. It's the same." Cultural analysis at the border. I shrugged like an outsider should and he let me move on with my life, but I think his cultural analysis was more nuanced than one might first think, and Hallberg's novel of the 1970s does resonate with 2015 America.

Hallberg's novel is certainly nuanced and complicated in ways that readers of great books find satisfying. He holds together a story that finds of the unlikely intermingling of characters from the Tompkins Square squats, the Long Island suburbs, and the Central Park penthouses. The burgeoning punk movement and the exploding heroin scene impact affect the high-end real estate speculators, and vice-versa. It's a novel that wants to capture the entire range of New York life, but even 1,000 pages is not nearly enough. Still, Hallberg does an admirable job with characters destitute and absurdly wealthy; gay and straight; hip and uptight; black and white.

In the three-page Prologue — which, along with the short Postscript, is the only first-person narrative, and the only clue as to who has put together this long story — Hallberg writes, "For if the evidence points to anything, it's that there is no one, unitary City. Or if there is, it's the sum of thousands of variations. . ." He has spelled out the impossibility of the task ahead of him, but he closes the Prologue with this call to spiritual arms: "Who among us — if it means letting go of the insanity, the mystery, the total useless beauty of the million once-possible New Yorks — is ready even now to abandon hope?" Perhaps 1970s New York is an inferno and Hell's Kitchen is aptly named, but this is the great achievement of *City On Fire*: Hallberg exposes the setting's torment and tortures while simultaneously giving the reader the various loves that refuse to give in to the hopeless surrounding.

Roughly, four separate worlds circle in and out of each other's orbit, casting shadows and threatening collisions until Hallberg brings them all together in cataclysm by the novel's end. The novel begins with Mercer Goodman and William Hamilton-Sweeney III trying to fall in love despite Mercer's small-town naiveté and William's secretive nature compounded by a heroin problem. William is scion to the Hamilton-Sweeney empire, but he's run from it and lives the '70s artist life on the Lower East Side. William becomes an underground sensation through his band Ex Post Facto. In evoking this milieu, Hallberg displays a great feel for the nascent punk movement and its music.

Which leads us to Samantha and Charlie, suburban Long Island teenagers just venturing out into the city. For me, their story is the heart of the book (Hallberg's most virtuosic performance is his recreation of Sam's punk 'zine "Land of 1,000 Dances." It's an amazing 24 pages of punk fandom, political perspective, teen angst, and brilliant personal and cultural critique all within the parameters of a 17-year-old girl cast in 1976 NYC perspective.). Sam and Charlie

have large teenage souls and their suffering is the most powerfully wrenching writing in the novel. They fall in with a bad crowd—a homicidal crowd, it turns out—and Hallberg lets the dangers of an underground movement play out like the actualized nightmares of parents everywhere.

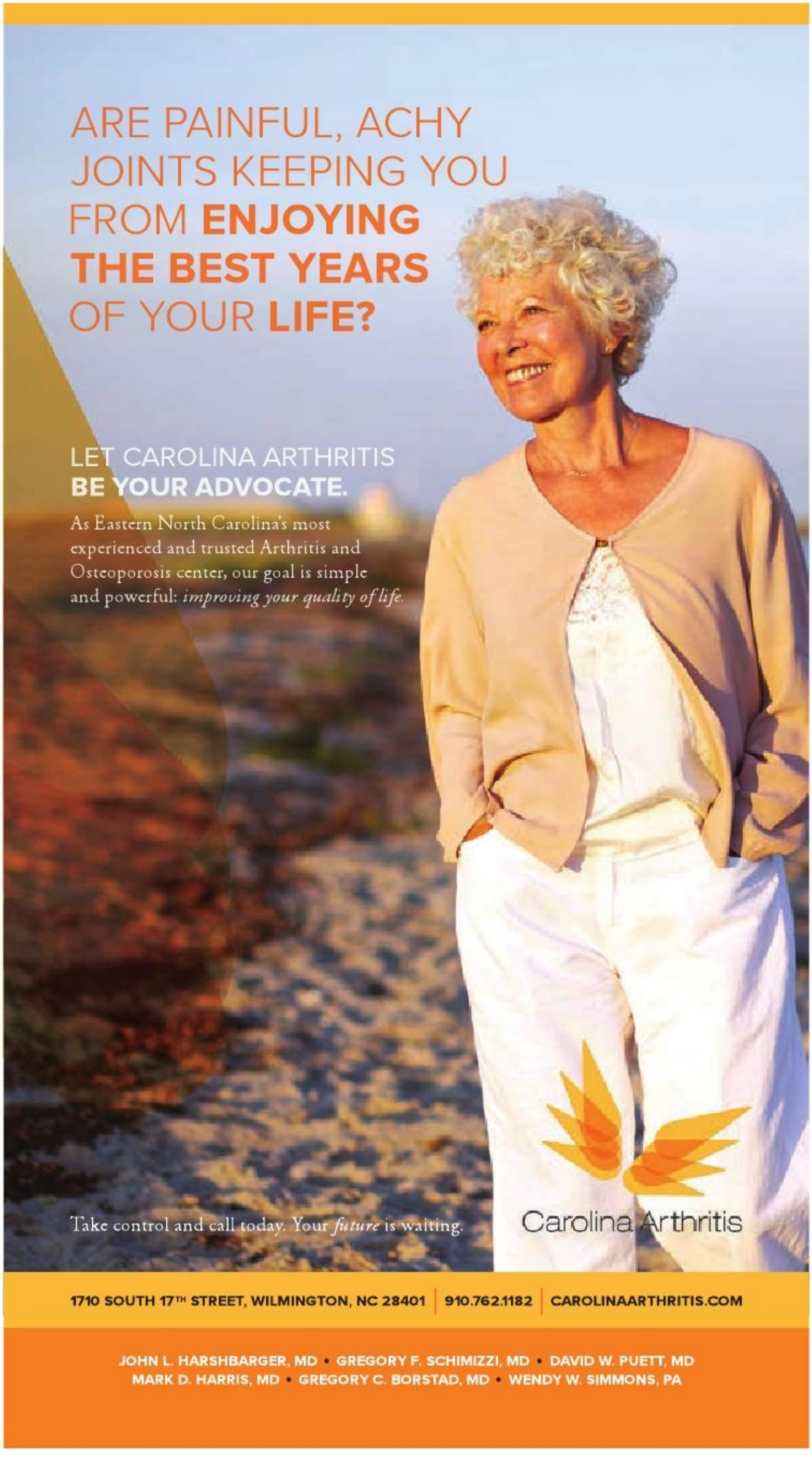
The super wealthy are represented by the Hamilton-Sweeney family, and for the most part the family members are treated as real people trying to love their children despite all the compromises of their decisions and behaviors. Only the stepfamily is given the role of hideous beyond redemption and through its characters, Hallberg demonstrates how well he knows his NYC history; the real estate speculators in 1970s New York intentionally and inhumanely burned out a chunk of the city to create uninhabitable zones that could then be scooped up for a song and redeveloped. The people living in these blighted zones were of no consequence, and Hallberg lets Amory Gould, "the Demon Brother," stand in for the irredeemable greed and treachery of the times.

The fourth intersecting world belongs to the servants of the city: the police and the journalists. The crippled detective (have I forgotten to mention that *City On Fire* is also a crime novel and its narrative is propelled by an unsolved act of violence?) and the down-on-his-luck investigative reporter are both compelling in their own sorrows. Hallberg uses the 1977 citywide blackout like a set piece in the closing of a Hitchcock film to bring most these people together. It's remarkable to watch a novelist let all the pieces of a 900-page puzzle fall into the city and to then put them together in the complete dark of the NYC streets.

A question for any book of this size is: Did it really need to be this long? Maybe; maybe not, but the time and investment required of the reader also creates a special place for the novel. It becomes part of your psyche in a way shorter books cannot. I lived with *City On Fire* through planes and hotels and customs and back to my home in Greensboro. I was never *not* invested in these characters and kept up a constant chatter about the book with my traveling companions. The novel is ambitious, and Hallberg brings heart and intelligence and a proprioceptive feel for the physical body of a city. Yes, it's long, but outside the arm-draining weariness of holding it, *City On Fire* remained an unflaggingly engaging, and sometimes exhilarating, throughout read.

Hallberg's father, William Hallberg, who died in 2014, wrote the novel *The Rub of the Green* and was a longtime professor in the English Department at East Carolina University. He must have read Dante to his son in the crib. Garth Hallberg was ready from an early age to take on this literary epic. It is available October 13 in fine bookstores everywhere.

Brian Lampkin is one of the owners of Scuppernong Books in Greensboro.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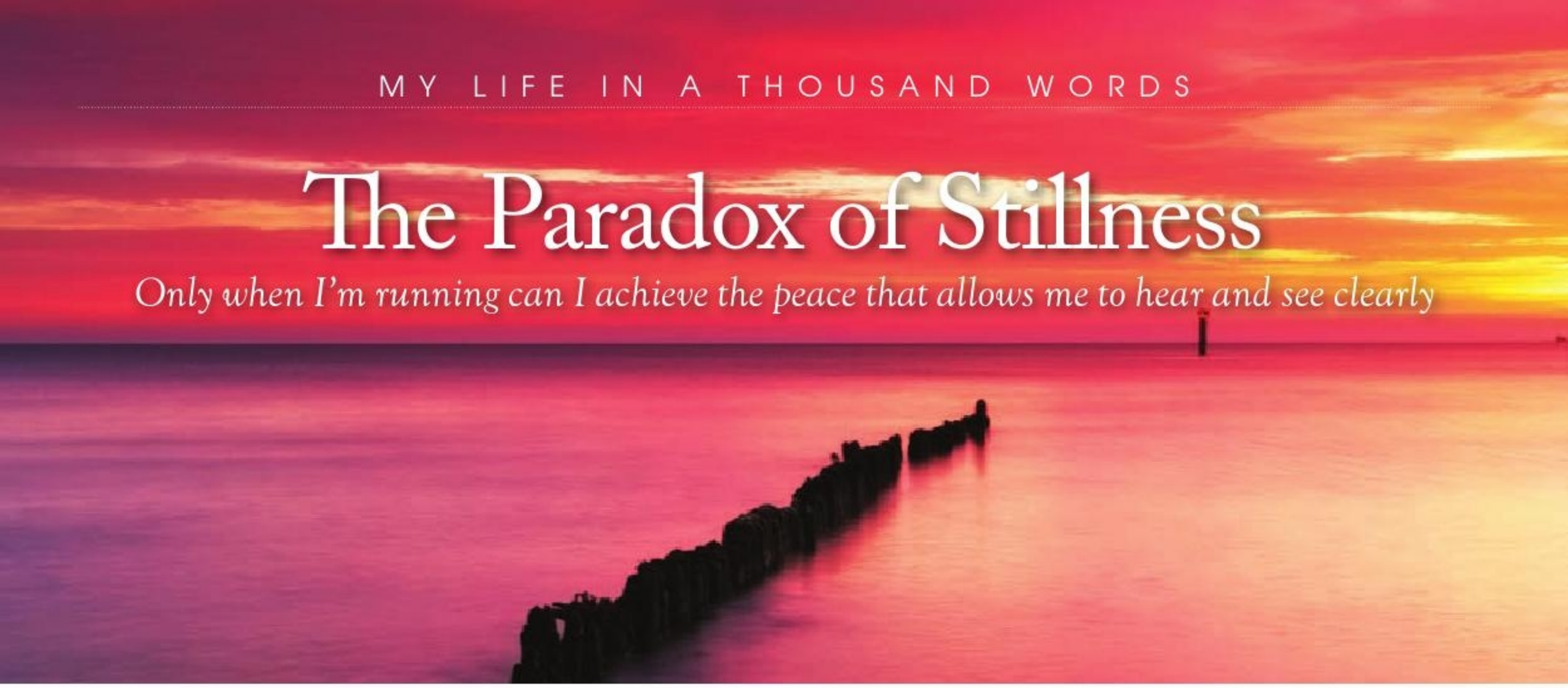
The Paradox of Stillness

Only when I'm running can I achieve the peace that allows me to hear and see clearly



By Emily Louise Smith

Winter light spares nothing on this island. It lavishes equally the sailboats moored in Banks Channel, the boarded ice-cream stand on Lumina Avenue, the faded towels in the display windows of Wings. It bathes the egret in the marsh at the center of Harbor Island, where I begin my usual six-mile run, lingers on the boats shrink-wrapped and stacked four-high in dry docks, slides down metal awnings on the island's old cottages, which it clearly loves best. It pauses along the concrete face of St. Therese in the alcove over the Catholic church's sanctuary. This is Wrightsville Beach in the off-season, gloriously empty of tourists. If I time it right, I'll make it around the John Nesbitt Loop, out to the South End gazebo to stretch, just as the sun slips behind Masonboro like a coin down a jukebox's throat.

Some nights I run the beach end to end without seeing another person. My favorite public accesses cut through oleander and fig trees, a rare undeveloped lot and shingled house. The waves I can't hear when running along the marsh crescendo as I crest a walkway over the sand. No matter how many times I pass through here, the ocean is never less imposing.

Everything's dialed up on this side: the smell of salt, the inky expanse of sky, the bright stories of constellations. "My God," I say to greet it, stretching my arms overhead, "I live here." Come June, this section of beach is an obstacle course of chairs and coolers, sandcastles and moats. Summer leans close, and the humidity slows everything it touches. But winter here is clear and invigorating, makes my run fast and flat. Bitter winds from the Northeast hustle clouds of loose sand down the beach. The wind grips my cheeks and eddies in my ears and head, my legs and lungs, as if the whole island were suddenly swirling in my chest. Three miles in, I exhale a laugh no one has ever heard — it's reserved for my romance with being alone.

My devotion to this winter beach run was hard won. I don't come naturally to Wilmington's soggy landscape. For more than a decade now, this place has left me unsettled. Its barrier islands migrate with currents and wind; wandering inlets can close with a single storm. Mason's Inlet has shifted more than a half-mile south in the past fifteen years. Summer breezes push sand back to the Northeast. Just look at the juniper trees to see how indecisive and twitchy the wind can be here, its ambivalence ensconced in their branches. When I first encountered the illustrations of Claude Howell in the pages of Ben Dixon MacNeill's *The Hatterasman*, I couldn't explain how his sparse pen and ink drawings so deftly capture our restless islands. It would take me years to fully appreciate what my colleague Philip Gerard meant when he wrote that Howell's drawings are filled with wind.

A native of the South Carolina Piedmont, I prefer the golden fanfare of ginkgo leaves, the Japanese maples that deepen in both spring and fall — colors that smell of smoke and hay. As kids, my sister and I tromped through the Appalachian forests of the Carolinas and Tennessee, scrambled across Grandfather Mountain's swinging bridge, and up craggy peaks to sweeping views of the valleys. All these years later, though, it's not those overlooks that have stayed with me, but rather the coves of laurel and rhododendron my acrophobic father loved, light filtered through a canopy of oaks and Eastern hemlocks. The old forest made me feel safe too. At summer camp, I savored the days our counselors directed us to disburse into the woods with notebooks. The object was simply to lean against a trunk and record everything we saw, heard and smelled.

My first year living on the coast, I grieved that familiar pageant of color, the mountains and farm seasons that had taught me how to feel. I missed counting the weeks until school started by which peach varietal — Monroe, Cresthaven, Loring — filled the baskets at the stand. So when I left Wilmington after graduate school to move back to South Carolina, I confess that I didn't mind its downtown steeples and Antebellum columns awash in afternoon light, its riverboat *Henrietta*, framed in my rear-view mirror. I couldn't have predicted that less than a year later, I'd drive back across the Cape Fear to accept a coveted teaching position at my alma mater, and that, after more than a decade here, I'd still resist putting down roots. Don't get me wrong: I've built a rewarding career, a community of friends and writers, helped found a magazine and my dream press, but I've not yet invested in a house or condo. A house is a story that could go on for years, and part of me needs to maintain the illusion that I might wander like an inlet.

I moved not long ago from a 1920s bungalow in historic Carolina Place

to a house tucked along a prong of Bradley Creek. The marsh swells with moon tides, and every morning, light floods the cordgrass. Outside my kitchen window, a heron glides past, an elusive clapper rail purrs. Nearby vernal ponds ripen with Mabee's salamanders and the fairy shrimp popularized as mail-order Sea-Monkeys. Once they herald spring, the peepers and other resident frogs don't give up their raucous chorus until fall. I leave my porch light burning all night, because the insects that accumulate around it draw the jewel-sized beauties out of the trees to my doorstep.

It's my new proximity to the ocean, this inching closer, that makes beach runs possible several times a week. A camera mounted at the corner surf shop records the island's secrets like a diary and, on a monitor in the window, replays the morning light in the street outside Tower 7, the patient father whose children wag ice-cream painted tongues at it, the couple late at night, faces full of beer and fresh freckles, who can't contain the humidity and endless vacation in front of them without combusting in argument. I lengthen my stride, hold my head a little higher as I pass. If you could isolate the frames, you'd see a woman shedding winter layers of fleece and gloves in favor of shorts and a tank top. You'd see my face become a red berry in July, wet hair curl at the nape of my neck. You might not notice a woman praying, her senses heightened, how acutely aware I am when I'm running. You wouldn't see me becoming a little more myself with each loop, the ideas I'm working out, or the paragraphs I'm writing. Perhaps that's the paradox of stillness: Only when I'm in motion can I achieve the peace that allows me to see and hear clearly, to attune myself to my surroundings.

Though I've always relished long, solo runs, I've also made some of my best friends while running this island. The beats of our feet, synced strides, and arms swinging in unison allow us to talk about subjects that might not come up as easily while sitting across from one another. Our late 30s have brought their share of hardships — cancer, miscarriage, divorce, rehab — but none of these has been off limits. Just as valuable, we've learned the rare art of being quiet together. This winter, as we crossed the bridge, a friend spotted a bottlenose dolphin in the channel. Like me, she confronts grief by turning up the speed and distance — it's one of many reasons we get along well — but that day we slowed to watch its dorsal fin windmill to the surface, vanish, and appear again. When it swam beyond sight, we picked up the pace, but not the conversation. For a while, we ran in silence — simply held it, and everything unsaid but understood, between us.

Maybe home, too, is an idea that can lie dormant in us for a long time before it rises and floods us with familiarity. Like the fairy shrimp eggs, waiting years in the loamy soil for a good spring rain to coax them to life, or the peepers that survive winter beneath a shingle of loose bark. Or that unfailing September day when I come home, push my key in the lock, and realize suddenly that the frogs are gone and have taken summer with them. It's my new way of telling the seasons.

Which brings me to a summer night I keep tucked in my memory. As I rounded the corner near the athletic fields that border the parking lot, a toy airplane whirred by, dragging the pink banner of sunset in behind it. I lingered there, stretching, as more enthusiasts arrived and spaced out across the field, each attached to a miniature aircraft. The oncoming dark buzzed with planes wheeling overhead like illuminated sea birds. Spectators gathered, and I leaned close to watch a father wrap his son's arms, their four hands guide the remote that, for a little while at least, tethered our hearts to the sky.

Emily Louise Smith is director of the Publishing Laboratory at the University of North Carolina Wilmington and the publisher of Ecotone *magazine and Lookout Books. An expanded version of this essay is forthcoming in* 27 Views of Wilmington *(Eno Publishers). She's finally in the market for a house.*

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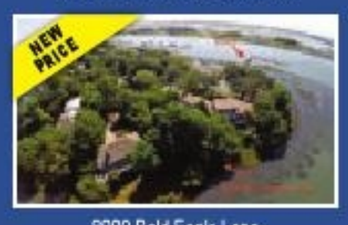

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Lunch With the Principal

Talk of youth enrichment and a daily special with a kick

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

What do you remember about Friday afternoons during middle school? If you're like me, you probably spent a lot of time staring at the clock, counting minutes until the weekend. If you're a sixth-, seventh- or eighth-grader at D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy, however, you might forget about the clock because you're too busy dancing, making movies or knitting.

Knitting?

"They really like to knit," Dr. Eric Irizarry, Virgo's principal, told me over lunch one day at Sweet n Savory Café near Wrightsville Beach. Eric's middle schoolers enjoy a wide array of other activities, like yoga, comedy improv, gardening and chess. With the help of an extensive roster of local volunteers, Virgo provides a rich extracurricular program to students who would, otherwise, have few such experiences. "For kids that don't have resources to play soccer after school, our goal is to bring that to them."

Virgo's Friday programming makes up one component of a wide-ranging set of resources aimed at residents of a 13-square-block area of downtown Wilmington that in 2010 was designated the Youth Enrichment Zone, or YEZ. Back then, the neighborhood had the highest crime rate in the city, as well as many families living in poverty. The YEZ, which is modeled on the widely praised Harlem Children's Zone in New York, was created to address the complex needs of this community. According to the YEZ's 2012 annual report, in the first three years of the organization's existence, the neighborhood crime rate dropped 27 percent.

As part of this community-wide effort, Virgo, which closed as a middle school in 2011, reopened in 2012 with a holistic mission focused not just on academics, but also on the overall well being of its students. "We want to build relationships with kids," Eric told me. "Students grow by seeing what's out there in the world, outside their own neighborhood." When school administrators discovered that a large number of Virgo's original sixth-grade class had never been to the beach, for example, they took a field trip.

Eric himself has spent a lot of time at the beach. He supported his studies at UNCW — where he earned his bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. in education — by waiting tables part-time at the Oceanic Restaurant at Wrightsville Beach. Those years in the food service industry might explain how smoothly he made the transition from talking about Virgo's teacher-to-student ratios (about 26:1) and iPad use (1:1) to assessing our lunch. First, we tried a grilled salmon-topped spinach salad, which included sliced Granny Smith apples, cranberries, candied walnuts, bacon bits, and puffy "croutons" of deep-fried brie, all pulled together with a tangy balsamic vinaigrette. "With salmon, you can really mess it up," Eric noted, "but the sweet taste of the brie with the sour of the apple and cranberry really play off each other."

At Sweet n Savory (and, yes, the copy editor in me has to complain about the non-word between "Sweet" and "Savory"), we tried several of the sandwiches, all made with bread from the restaurant's bakery. The Johnny Appleseed mixed textures and flavors by pairing turkey, Havarti cheese and sliced Granny Smith apples with a smear of honey mustard on a light and flaky croissant. ("Great comfort food," as Eric put it.) The Uptown, a daily special, piled layers of house-smoked pastrami, salami and provolone with arugula, tomatoes, onion, banana peppers and roasted garlic aioli on a fresh baguette. Though that sandwich sounds like a meat-eater's extravaganza, it was actually the arugula, Eric noted, that "really gives it a kick."

Eric's doctorate means he has a strong background in educational theory, but Virgo's particular situation requires that he and his staff be creative and practical, too. They opened a Parents Room at the school, for example, so that moms and dads could gather there to drink coffee, attend workshops, or use computers to

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write resumés or research career opportunities. "If you have parents who are trying to find better jobs," he told me, "eventually that's going to help that child."

This year, Virgo graduated its first eighth-grade class. Out of ninety kids, fifteen have enrolled in rigorous early college high schools, and one student earned a full scholarship to Cape Fear Academy. Test scores show improvement as well. Back in 2012, this group of students demonstrated 10 percent proficiency in reading and math. Three years later, proficiency rates have increased to 25 percent in math and 40 percent in reading.

These scores remain low and worrisome, however. The North Carolina Board

of Education, which weighs "proficiency" more heavily than "growth," gave Virgo an "F" on its school report card last year. Low grades mean that these students are not fully prepared for success. "It's very difficult after third grade to really close that gap if they're behind," Eric told me, but "you can't water it down. You've got to bring those kids up."

After only three years, and one graduating class, it's too early to tell how well Virgo will succeed in that mission, but school staff, along with parents and volunteers, are working hard to make a difference, one child at a time. And they are seeing results. One Virgo student, for example, recently had a film accepted in the North Carolina Black Film Festival. Another won third place in the state's "My Magna Carta" essay competition. A third student, so talented as a public speaker that Eric said "he could sell ice to an Eskimo," recently joined Mayor Bill Saffo and District Attorney Ben David on Wilmington's Blue Ribbon Commission, which works to address problems in the Youth Enrichment Zone. Those individual accomplishments might not be reflected in test scores, but they do demonstrate progress and, Eric told me, "show the possibilities of what can happen when a community rallies."

Virgo's experiment in holistic education continues to earn support in New Hanover County. In May, the school board approved a proposal to turn D.C. Virgo into the county's first year-around middle school in 2016. By keeping students in school 210 days a year, instead of the usual 185, Virgo can help reduce the learning lost during summer months, a particular problem for low-income students. In a way, though, Virgo is year-around already. Since its re-opening, it has become a 12-month resource for the neighborhood, providing free meals and activities for kids all summer long.

Meanwhile, Eric Irizarry keeps an eye out for exciting enrichment activities for Virgo's students. As we were saying goodbye after lunch, he had an inspiration. "Maybe someone wants to teach them to fish!" he said. "If someone can do fishing, I'll pay for the bus."

If you would like to volunteer with the students at D.C. Virgo, or simply find out more about the school and its programming, please contact Shemeka Shufford, Virgo's enrichment coordinator, at shemeka.shufford@nhcs.net, or phone the school office at (910) 251-6150, ext. 104. Sweet n Savory Café, 1611 Pavilion Place, is open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, call (910) 256-0115.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*

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True Southern Flavor

At award-winning The Bistro at Just Baked in Surf City, chef Bud Taylor blends the beloved tastes of his childhood with an educated wine list

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

By Jason Frye

"Being from the South, the kitchen was always a big part of my childhood," says Bud Taylor, chef-owner of The Bistro at Just Baked.

If you're not familiar with this Surf City eatery, don't blame yourself, because as Taylor says, "Topsail [Island] has never been known as a dining destination, unless you wanted greasy fried seafood." That's changed in the last decade, but only slightly. Steam pots have begun to replace the Calabash-style fried platters on many tables, and a handful of restaurants have introduced a fine-dining approach to coastal and Southern cuisine.

The Bistro at Just Baked is one of the restaurants helping swing the drawbridge open to give Topsail's food culture the room, inspiration and success it needs to take root. And they're getting recognized for it.

"We learned a few months ago that we were going to receive the *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence, but we had to keep quiet about it," says Taylor. "It's been a long couple of months."

The *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence is based not only on a restaurant's wine list, but on how that list relates to the food and how it demonstrates a breadth of styles, regions and vintages. Or, as *Wine Spectator* puts it, "the list must offer a well-chosen selection of quality producers along with a thematic match to the menu in both price and style."

In other words, the list just fits.

This is quite the accomplishment for Taylor. In the eight years The Bistro at Just Baked has been serving guests, the wine list has grown exponentially.

"Our first list was only seven bottles. Seven bottles!" Taylor says. "I knew very little about wine, but one thing I did know was that if I wanted to take the restaurant to the place I envisioned, I needed to educate myself on wine."

He found a tutor in Jena Schmidt, a wine specialist with one of the restaurant's distributors.

"I told her in one of our first meetings, 'I don't know much about wine, but I'm willing to learn, and that's where you come in.'"

They worked together, tasted hundreds of wines, attended wine expos and dinners and seminars, and, slowly, built a list that complemented Taylor's food and matched guest expectations.

"We were always careful to keep the guests in mind and designed a list that's approachable to the wine novice while being enjoyable for the wine enthusiast." He says this was no mean feat.

This same idea guides Taylor's food. Growing up Southern — "just across the water in a place called Turkey Creek," he says — the kitchen was a focal point, but unlike so many chefs who learned to cook from some matriarch, it was Taylor's granddad who taught him to cook. "He taught me how to fry eggs and bacon when I was so young I had to stand on an old lard bucket to reach the stove."

Those early lessons caught in his mind and led him to continue cooking, but always on his own and never with any formal training (Taylor went to school for graphic design and marketing). Then one foggy Christmas Eve, he cooked up a mess of collards for the big family dinner. "I was nervous. Cooking collard greens is a point of pride in the family. At that dinner, everyone was raving about those collards but no one knew who cooked them.

When I finally told them it was me, the look of surprise on all those faces told me I was really on to something."

From fried eggs to collards to a seven-bottle wine list to a *Wine Spectator* award. And all while Taylor stayed true to the Southern flavors he knew from childhood.

"Southern cuisine inspired me, but until recently it wasn't en vogue to cook an authentic Southern dish with authentic Southern ingredients. I grew up eating simple, amazing dishes cooked with the things we grew, raised or caught right here. I want more people to experience that kind of eating."

Enter the farm.

Ten acres. Six miles from the restaurant. Over a dozen crops and herbs grown exclusively for the use of Taylor's restaurant.

"We've grown a variety of things: heirloom tomatoes, okra, bush beans, basil, carrots, micro greens," he says. "We're in the process of remodeling our barn to house a full hydroponic system, which will allow us to have micro greens, tomatoes and a few other things year-round."

On top of that, he's planting a small orchard and getting ready to raise a greenhouse.

All of this – the Southern menu, the purchase and development of a farm – was borne from the frustration of the "farm-to-table" label. As that movement gained momentum, Taylor saw that the spirit of it was in the right place, but the supply – in terms of quality, scale and consistency of

product — was lacking.

"I was frustrated," he says, "but we were able to buy the farm and the pieces started to fit. I'm happy with what we're doing there and I'm thrilled to use my own products, but we're just getting started."

It's not a bad place to start from: a successful restaurant, your own farm supplying said restaurant, and a *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence. Sounds like a very good place to be.

Recipe and Wine Pairing Suggestions

Taylor says of his Southern cuisine: "I sometimes joke that my goal is to get every Northerner to like grits." It's not a joke, so all of you Northerners (and remember, around here, anything north of I-95 is the North) get ready for some shrimp and grits. And a good glass of wine, of course.

Bistro Shrimp & Grits By Bud Taylor

GRITS

3 cups cold water
1 cup whole milk
6 tablespoon butter
1 cup stone ground yellow grits (Adluh, Anson Mills or another quality brand; just don't use quick grits)
1 cup grated Asiago or parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper

SHRIMP & SAUCE

1 pound local shrimp
Cold, unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1 tablespoon minced shallot (may substitute red onion)
1/4 teaspoon minced garlic
4–6 oz. North Carolina country ham, cut into small strips
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 green tomato, cut into 1/2 inch dice
2 cups shrimp stock or seafood base
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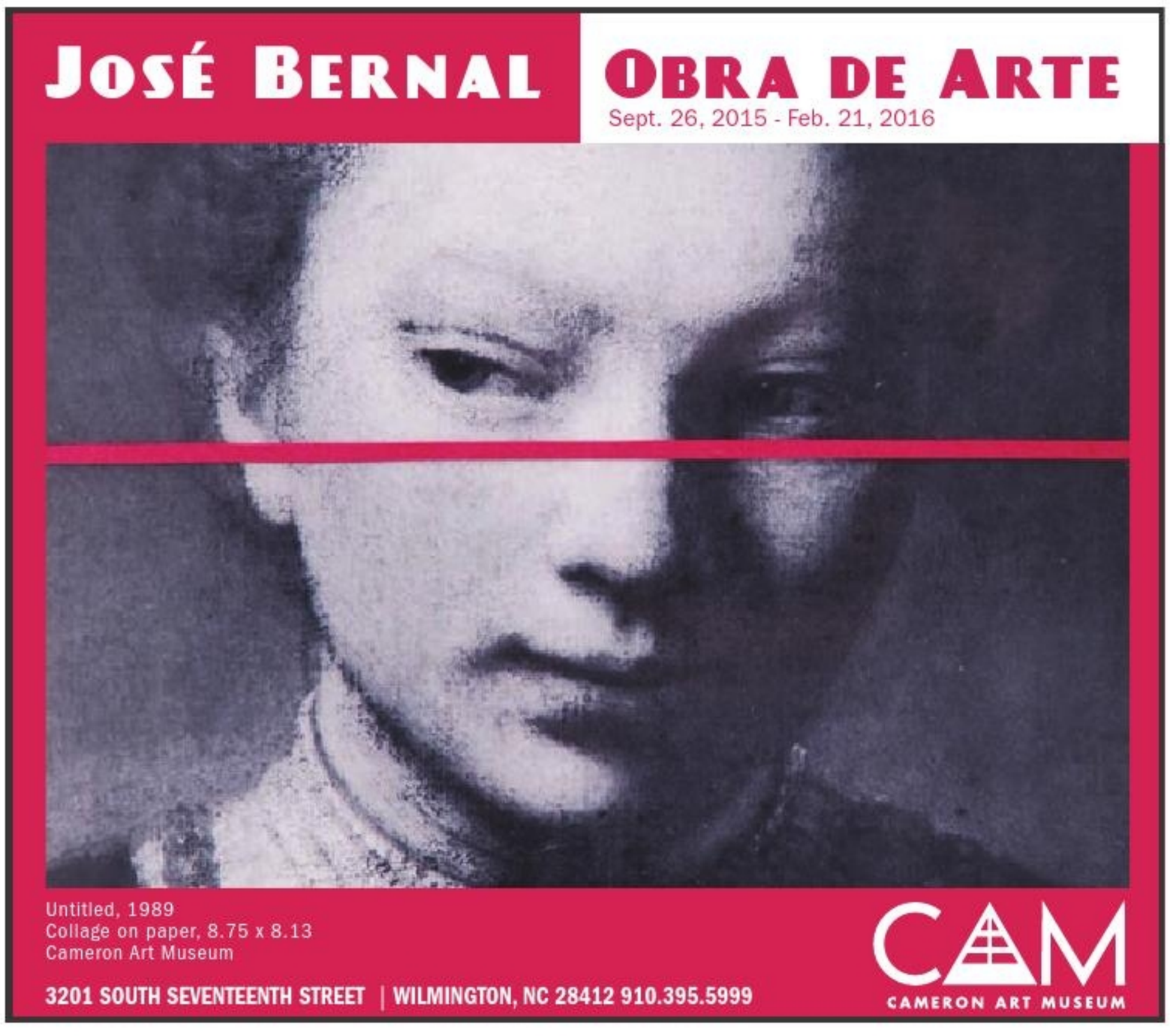
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Cooking Instructions:

GRITS

In stock pot bring water, milk and butter to a boil

Slowly whisk in grits and return to a boil for 1–2 minutes

Reduce heat to a high simmer and cook 30–45 minutes or until tender

Remove from heat and stir in cheese

Season to taste with salt and pepper

SHRIMP

While grits are cooking, peel and clean shrimp

Season with salt and pepper and set aside

SAUCE (can be made in advance and kept warm)

In hot sauté pan, place 2 tablespoons butter, shallot, garlic and country ham and cook until lightly brown

De-glaze pan with white wine

Add green tomatoes to pan and cook approximately 1 minute

Add shrimp stock and 2 tablespoons butter and let reduce by 1/4

Add scallions and fresh herbs

Remove from heat

Finish sauce by stirring several cubes of cold butter into sauce, until thickens slightly

Season to taste with salt and pepper

In separate (heated) pan:

Add 2 tablespoons butter and seasoned shrimp

Cook just until shrimp turn pink on bottom then turn shrimp and remove pan from heat

Shrimp will finish cooking with residual heat from pan

To serve:

Toss cooked shrimp into sauce

Divide grits into 4 bowls

Spoon sauce and shrimp mixture equally into bowls on top of grits. Do not stir up.

Garnish with fresh chive (optional)

Wine Recommendations:

Amarte Mas Albarino, Rias Baixas, Spain, 2013. The acidity will cut through the rich creaminess of the grits, and the underlying fruit will compliment the sweetness of fresh shrimp.

Biltmore Reserve Blanc de Blanc, Asheville, North Carolina, 2009. One of my favorite wines and a stunning example of what North Carolina wine can be. All the fruit was estate-grown — meaning grown on the Biltmore Estate — and bottled here in North Carolina. The acidity and bubbles will really make the shrimp and grits shine.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina *and* Moon NC Coast. *He's a barbecue judge, he rarely naps, and he's always on the road. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

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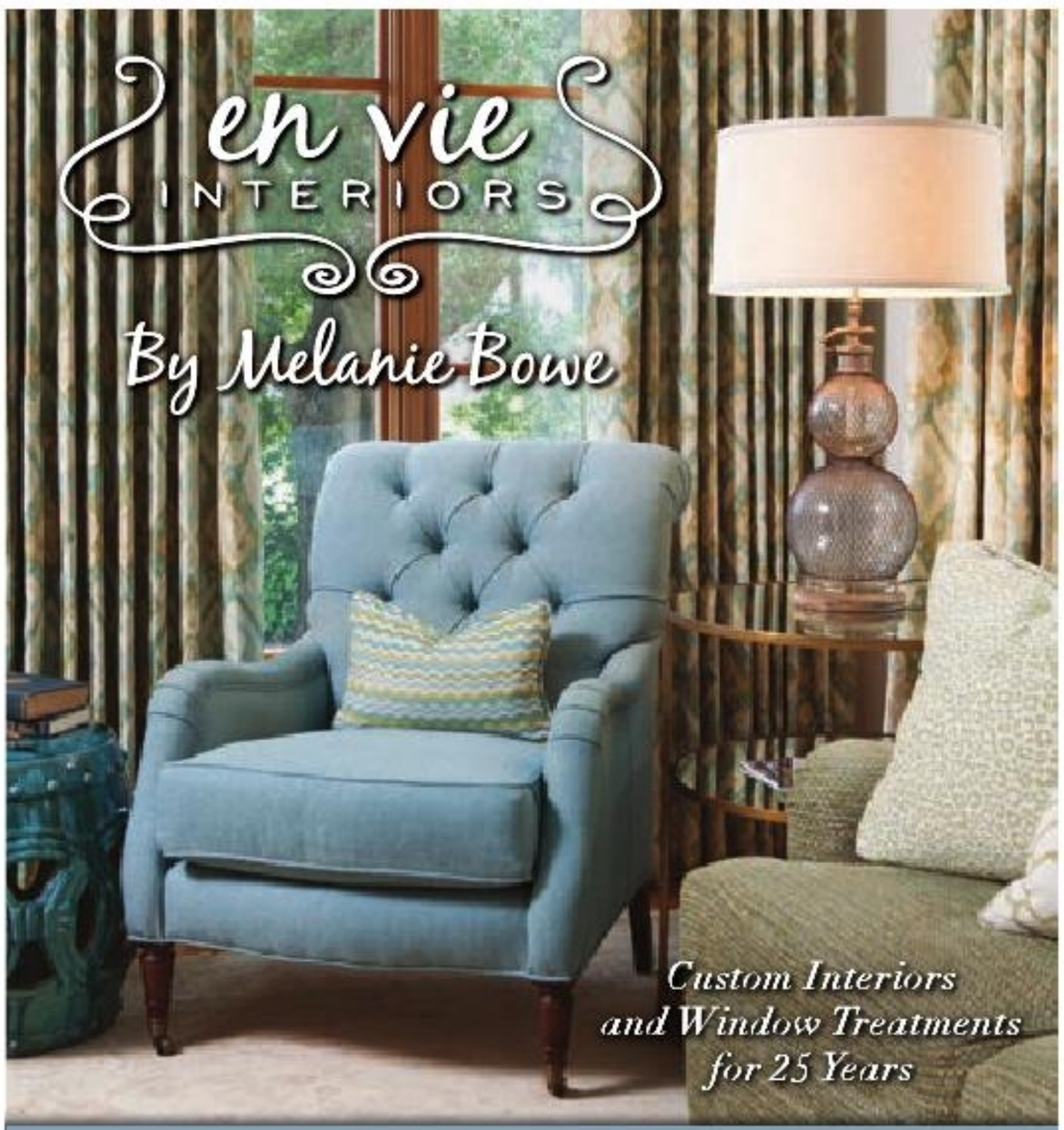

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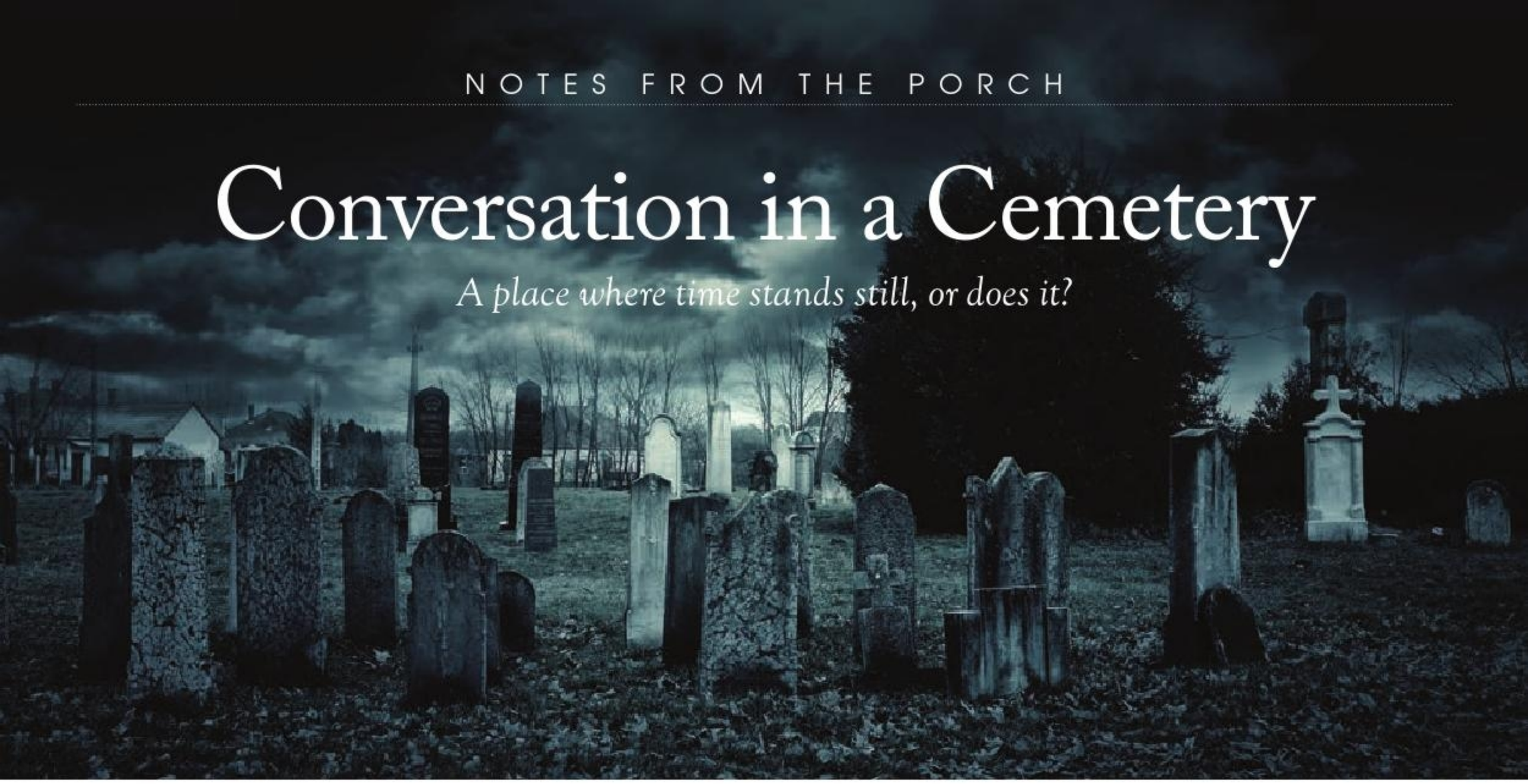
Conversation in a Cemetery

A place where time stands still, or does it?



By Bill Thompson

I seem to recall having heard this conversation when I visited the family cemetery a couple of weeks ago:

Jeremiah: *Wonder when they coming to get us?*

Henry: *Don't know. Say they got to count all the good against the bad we done. Could take a while. 'Course, how you measure time when you dead?*

Jeremiah: *Those that lived a long time got more to count. That's how come you look around this graveyard and there ain't no babies or children. They done come and gone. Probably they done gone upstairs.*

Henry: *Who'd a thought that a graveyard would have so much comin' and goin'. Look at that old man over there. He's been sittin' near 'bout all mornin'. He thinks he's here by himself but there must be fifteen, twenty folks sittin' and waitin' on these tombstones.*

Jeremiah: *Yeah, but he can't see us. He's still alive. I bet he don't even know that his wife is sittin' right beside him. Then again, he might. Sometimes being dead don't stop people from talkin' to the livin' even if the livin' can't hear 'em. Reckon he might know if she's through talking when they finish countin' her up and she leaves this graveyard.*

Henry: *That old man over there by that monument. Got on an Army uniform. He's been here since I got here. Guess they got to figure out how much of what he done in the war was really good and what was really bad. Sometimes that's hard to figure, you know. Sometimes folks, particularly soldiers, do good things that might be bad things under other circumstances and vice versa. You know, like killin' somebody. I bet they havin' a time sure enough weighin' all that.*

Jeremiah: *That fellow sittin' on the ground over yonder under that tree, now he is a puzzlement. I knowed him when he was just a boy worked down to the saw mill. Got his left arm caught in a chain when they was unloadin' logs. Pulled his arm right off his shoulder. Took him a while to heal up, but he come right back to work stackin' boards in the kiln. Did it with one arm all those years. Near 'bout big 'round as my leg. He was strong.*

Henry: *I always thought when you died all your messed up body parts was fixed up. His left arm's still all shrunk up.*

Jeremiah: *I guess the parts that come back is the size they were when they got messed up.*

Henry: *Seems like ol' Jimmy Ray and Jake been diggin' that grave all mornin'. 'Course, like you said, ain't no tellin' what time it is. But knowin' them boys like I do, they ain't in no hurry.*

Jeremiah: *This graveyard been sittin' back here in the woods since 'fore I was born. It'll be sittin' here long after they decide where I'm goin'. Jimmy Ray and Jake'll be diggin' holes with a shovel back here, too, I reckon. Cain't no machinery get through that little branch creek without messin' up the rest of the place. Guess there ain't no job more permanent than a gravedigger.*

Henry: *Looks like the little girl who got killed in the car wreck is gone. She was right over there where her mama kept puttin' them flowers. Ain't that somethin' the way you just look 'round and they gone. Ain't no trumpets or light comin' down through the clouds, no angels singin'. None o' that stuff. They just be gone.*

Jeremiah: *Yep, and when old Ezra left that grave with the wood marker over yonder, there won't no thunder and lightnin' neither; ground didn't open up and swaller him. Guess he coulda been goin' the other way. Didn't matter how he went. Just like the little girl: Look around and they gone.*

Henry: *Thing about a graveyard, you don't get anxious. Ain't no hurry. You don't get hungry neither. Or sleepy. Or tired. Or bored. Or hot. Or cold. Don't have to go to the bathroom. Don't have to listen to a lotta talk. Never know when we gone be gone do we, Jeremiah? Jeremiah?*

This essay is an excerpt from Listen to the South Wind, *a forthcoming book by Bill Thompson and photographer Doug Sasser, scheduled to be released this month. Available online and in bookstores.*

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Have You Read (insert name here)?

When readers ask, one question stands out

By Wiley Cash

Writers get asked a lot of tough questions, especially from readers. Here are a few questions that come to mind: *Why haven't you turned your book into a movie yet? How many books have you sold? How much money do you make? Have you contacted Oprah about putting your book on her book club list?* And, my personal favorite: *Are you ever going to work, or are you just going to keep writing?*

While these questions can be interesting, funny, humiliating and/or painful to address, there is one question that rankles my nerves and stops me in my tracks like no other:

Have you read [insert book title]? Before the questioner even finishes asking the question — meaning, before the questioner has a chance to mention the title of the book he or she is asking me about — I am already formulating a response as my brain cycles through a tiered system of its own questions. *What if you've read the book and hated it, but they loved it? What if you've read the book and loved it, but they hated it? What if you've read some of the book, but you never finished it? What if you've never read the book, and you're embarrassed?* And, the most terrifying: *What if you've never even heard of the book?*

I have a Ph.D. in literature, and I've spent roughly a billion years either sitting in a classroom or standing in front of one. I've traveled the country and met hundreds of booksellers that have recommended thousands of great books to me. But even with all of this experience I can almost guarantee you that I won't have read the book you're preparing to ask me about. This is because there are so many books and so many tastes that rarely do we find ourselves on similar footing when bandying about titles to books we have and have not read.

This isn't to say that I haven't tried my hardest to read the books you probably think I should've read. A few summers ago I made a list of ten such titles, but I only read *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Winesburg, Ohio* before I lost the list. I gave *Moby-Dick* a shot later that summer, but on a beach vacation with friends I realized that I wasn't going to get all the way through it. In the mornings I'd take Melville's novel and a cup of coffee and sit on the deck for a few hours of reading before others in the house began to stir. Our rental was about 300 yards from the beach, but I could see and hear the waves breaking on the shore. It was peaceful and beautiful until my brother-in-law, hung over and ornery, would stumble from the house and make his way to the ocean for the morning swim he hoped would revive him. I'd say hello and go back to *Moby-Dick*, looking up from time to time to see that my brother-in-law still had a ways to go before reaching the ocean. After about ten minutes I'd look up as he finally made it to the water, and I'd look back down at *Moby-Dick* and realize I was still on the same page. I was never going to finish this book. I'll be honest: I still haven't finished it, and that trip was four years ago.

But, oh Lord, I've lied about what I've read. I've looked you square in the face and answered yes when you asked me about *Invisible Man, The House of Mirth, Infinite Jest*, and *Walden*. That's right, I said *Walden*. I had a professor in college who said he hated Henry David Thoreau as an undergraduate, but once he became a professor he discovered that Thoreau had become a much better writer. I'm still waiting for that to happen. I find him a little too self-righteous for my taste. Maybe he'll be less so by the time I retire.

Perhaps I haven't read everything, but the things I've read I've read closely and wholly and meaningfully. I've never read *Gone with the Wind* or seen the movie, but I got a pretty good idea of the South's collapse when I read *Cold Mountain* (and when I saw the movie). As I said, I've never read *Ulysses*, but I know that Thomas Wolfe was deeply affected by it and modeled much of *Look Homeward, Angel* after it. I've read *Angel* dozens of times, and I feel comfortable saying that I know it and it's literary/historical/cultural implications as well as any Joyce scholar could know the literary/historical/cultural implications of *Ulysses*. I can claim an emotional attachment to *Angel* as well. I read it over and over in the ten long years I lived outside of North Carolina because it gave me a way to feel like I was back inside a place I loved and missed.

Another confession: I've never read Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, even though I consider myself a huge fan of her work. On the other hand, I've read *Beloved* (and seen the movie!) several times, and I've probably read and taught *Song of Solomon* more than I've read and taught anything else. More than any other book, it's the one that made me want to be a writer in the first place.

One of my clearest memories of a reading experience is coming to the end of *Song of Solomon* in the summer of 1997. I was home after my first year of college, in the middle of a break-up, and seemingly adrift in the world. While reading Morrison's novel about a young man searching for a role in his own life, I was offered a reprieve from mine. When I finished the book I was sitting in a lawn chair in my parents' backyard. I closed the novel, looked at the cover, sighed, and started reading it all over again.

From now on I'll do my best to be honest with you about what I have and have not read. Besides, I think we need to focus less on what we've read and more on how we've read it: what we've learned, what we've enjoyed, what we've embraced, and, perhaps most importantly, what we've remembered.

Wiley Cash is a New York Times *best-selling author whose second novel,* This Dark Road to Mercy, *was released last year. He lives in Wilmington.*

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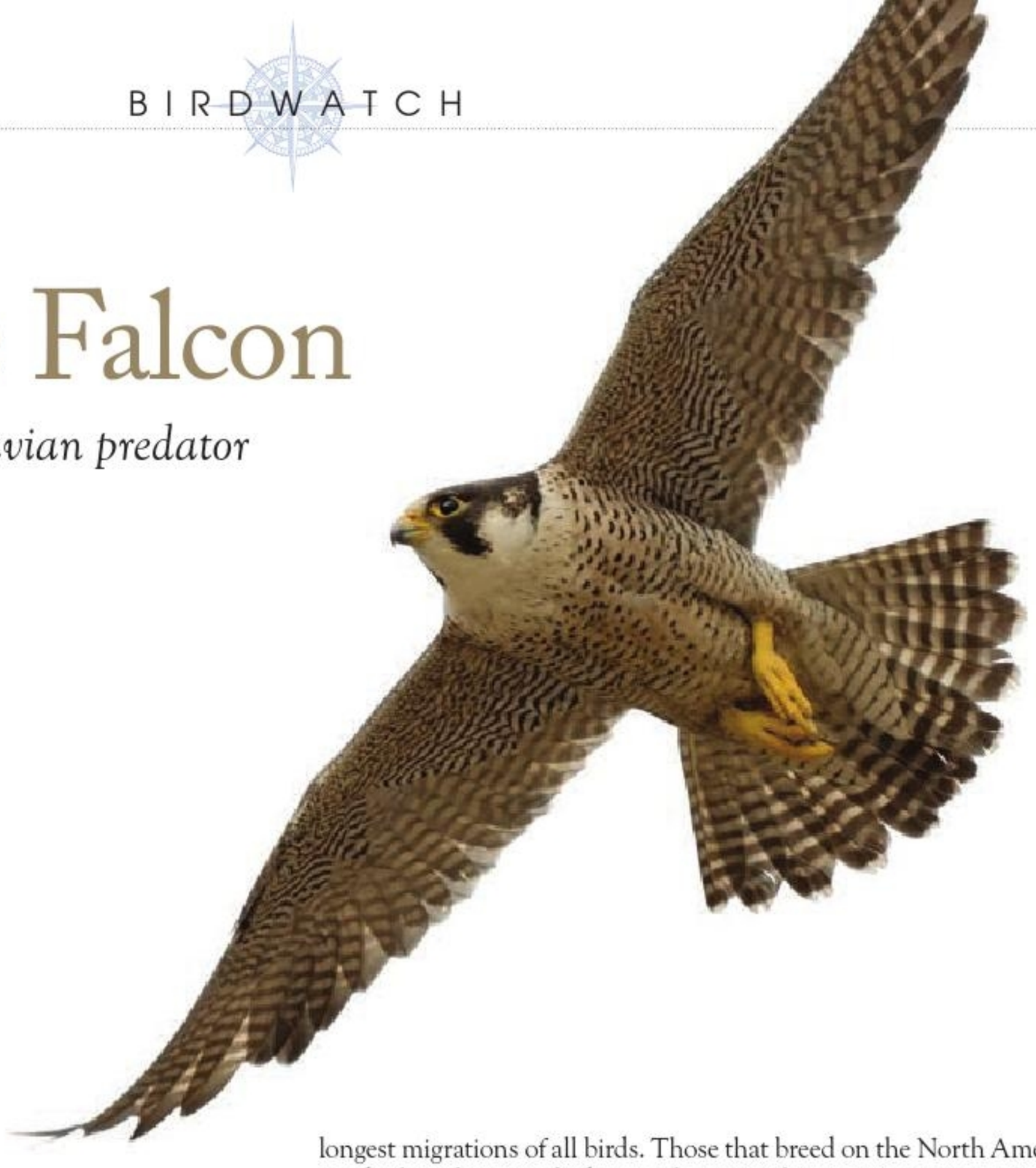


By Susan Campbell

As the mercury begins to fall,

it is time to keep a sharp eye out for the return of the consummate avian predator, the peregrine falcon. This handsome fast-flyer can be found worldwide in a variety of habitats. During winter months, we are lucky enough to find this species along the North Carolina coast.

Readily recognizable, peregrine falcons are large raptors with long, pointed wings and a long tail. Adults have barred underparts, whereas immature birds are streaked. Both, however, have steely upperparts and a dark head with noticeable "sideburns." Peregrines tend to be solitary outside of the breeding season, likely due to the large territory they require for foraging.

Also known as "duck hawks," peregrine falcons hunt medium-sized birds such as ducks (surprise, surprise), terns, gulls and larger shorebirds. Individuals dive from high perches with wings folded to catch unsuspecting prey, a technique called stooping. During such dramatic pursuits, these birds easily reach speeds of 75 miles per hour. Labeled as world's fastest bird, peregrines have been clocked as fast as 200 miles per hour while stooping from half-mile perches.

In summer months, they can be found breeding on the tundra, on cliff ledges and man-made structures such as church steeples and skyscrapers. Pairs of peregrines return to the same sites for breeding season, raising three or four youngsters each year. In cities, peregrines take advantage of the endless supply of pigeons and starlings to feed their growing families, but they will pursue whatever sizable bird-prey is available.

With a name that comes from the Latin word for "wanderer," perhaps it's no surprise to learn that peregrines are also known for having one of the longest migrations of all birds. Those that breed on the North American tundra have been tracked to southern South America in winter. Individuals can cover more than 15,000 miles a year; some travel over the open ocean as they migrate down the East Coast.

Most notably, the peregrine falcon is the subject of a real success story. There was a time when these birds could not be found anywhere in North Carolina or even this region of the United States. As a result of widespread use of the pesticide DDT, the Eastern population was virtually driven to extinction by the middle of the twentieth century. In 1970, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service declared the peregrine falcon an endangered species. Given broad national interest in this species, intensive work to reintroduce peregrines began at Cornell University. Effective captive breeding techniques and release procedures known as "hacking" rapidly developed. Thousands of birds were hacked at hundreds of sites and, as a result, the species was de-listed in 1999.

By the mid-'80s, young birds were hacked at several remote sites in western North Carolina. After twenty-plus years, peregrines were once again gracing the sky. Of course, state biologists continue to monitor the breeding population. This summer, five of the ten occupied sites had successful nests which hosted a total of fourteen young. Believe it or not, this includes the Wells Fargo building in downtown Charlotte, where the resident pair has been nesting for three years.

In the winter around here, peregrines may perch high on telephone poles, pilings or simply on a dune line. Should you see flocks of shorebirds or gulls suddenly explode into flight, look carefully for a large falcon in their midst — it just might have an unsuspecting individual in its talons. There's nothing like witnessing one of these amazing birds in action!

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. Contact her at (910) 585-0574 or susan@ncaves.com

Our Flowering Flame

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

Imagine a forest, boundless and unbroken. We had one once, a forest born of fire. This was a sprawling wilderness of longleaf pine, an evergreen that makes manifest Novalis' poetic vision of a tree as "a flowering flame." These days most of us know more about the demise of the Amazon rainforest than about the decline and fall of our Southern fire forest. It hardly seems possible that we scraped it off the map and from our collective memory so quickly, since this forest was the defining feature of our Southern landscape. Longleaf spanned an area from southern Virginia to central Florida before sweeping west into southeastern Texas — an immense range of around 150,000 square miles, nearly the size of California.

In broad strokes, longleaf decline began when the Native Americans were forced off their land. Soon after, settlers released feral hogs in the woods to forage; the animals developed such a rapacious appetite for the seedlings that they were dubbed "Piney-woods rooters." By the mid-1800s, author Lawrence Early notes, nearly 12 million of these hogs roamed the forests of the Southeast. Pine sap was also valuable. Plantation slaves were instructed to bleed the trees to satisfy our nation's desire for turpentine and naval stores, a practice that continued long after emancipation. Longleaf timber was cleared for cotton fields, and harvested for shipbuilding and other construction. The forest was clear-cut at an alarming rate. Ecologist and author Janisse Ray unearthed a letter to the editor written in 1885 by a Georgia traveler. "Gone!" he wrote. "An invasion of a terrible army of axemen, like so many huge locusts, has swept over the whole face of the land, leaving nought of former grandeur but treeless stumps to mark the track of their tramp." By the 1900s, what little longleaf remained was tended by the settlers' descendants with annual fires to maintain an open understory, a practice learned from the native population.

As time went on, the ecological advantages for burning longleaf forests weren't entirely clear to its advocates or its critics. In the wild, longleaf fires were usually lightning-based and allowed to burn. But for landowners throughout the South, burning was customary and perhaps a bit rote, and mostly seen as a way to pre-empt wildfires, to control ticks and chiggers, and to allow for easier hunting. No one understood that burning the longleaf understory was essential to its survival as a species. Without an open understory, the leaf litter on the forest floor becomes impenetrable to pine seeds. As the older pines die off, other species, like oaks, invade, a process known as forest succession.

By the early twentieth century, the American Forestry Association (AFA) considered any woodland fire a threat, and because neither Southerners nor foresters fully understood the necessary role of natural and manmade fires to the survival of the longleaf species, foresters promoted aggressive fire suppression. The AFA's main mission during those years was to prevent Southerners from burning the woods. To achieve this objective, the AFA created a group known as the Dixie Crusaders. This group of young foresters canvassed the South, venturing into remote Southern communities with picture shows that promoted fire suppression. Oftentimes their message was that burning the woods was the devil's work and sinful. It was a wildly successful canvass. The Crusaders' success meant that the longleaf understory grew thick, and longleaf forests were slowly smothered. Today, only 1,500 acres of "pre-settlement" or "virgin" longleaf pine remain.

But all is not lost. Longleaf is making a comeback in southeastern North Carolina, in large part because the Nature Conservancy is committed to acquiring and restoring former longleaf savannas to their former glory. Case in point: the McLean Savanna, a 921-acre property in Pender County that the Nature Conservancy acquired through two purchases, one in 2008 and another in 2011.

It's part of an effort to restore a continuous longleaf forest along the Onslow Bight — a long inward-bending thirty-mile-wide section of coastal plain that runs from the upper Cape Fear to the Pamlico River. And where there's longleaf restoration, there's fire. Luckily, the Conservancy has fire specialist Angie Carl, who knows more about fire than just about anyone in the region.

In order to get a better understanding of longleaf restoration and controlled burns, Angie Carl invites me to observe her work at the McLean site one blue-sky morning. Angie is a compactly built, pony-tailed brunette in her mid-30s. She's smart and direct with a slightly wry half-smile.

Managing the forest with fire is a daunting task. Angie routinely burns often over 100 acres at a time. Before I can enter the site to observe the crew, I'm required to suit up in protective gear. I am also given a VHF radio and a portable fire shelter. Unlike the rest of the crew, I have a crew member who escorts me around on a Bobcat, and who keeps me at a good distance from the flames. Safety first on-site.

Angie and her crew huddle up to review the agenda for the day. Some crew members are assigned to set firebreaks; others will manage hotter, more heavily fueled areas. Today the crew is a mix of highly experienced firefighters and a few trainees — in fact, some of the crew also serve as smoke jumpers out West. In other words, these folks know their stuff.

Once Angie lays out the day's objective, the crew gets to work. They use drip torches to set a line of fire to clear out the thick understory that runs along the south side of a long dirt road.

"There's a lot of fuel in there," Angie says, pointing at the snarled understory of briars, vines and oak seedlings thick enough to conceal a bear at five paces. Within minutes, there's a loud whump and a raging wall of flame. Other crew members are setting a similar fire on the other side of the property. Angie monitors the progress via VHF, and she moves back and forth between the two sites on an ATV. There's so much smoke that she vanishes from sight at fifty feet.

The fire is both powerful and mesmerizing, and like the ocean, it's a dangerous folly to turn your back on it. A fierce gust of heat hits me all at once. Smoke and ash particles soon fill the forest with a gray-yellow cloud that obscures the sun. Then there's the noise. A few minutes before, I'd closed my eyes and savored the quiet of the countryside; now there's a constant din, a low pulsing roar punctuated by sudden pops and cracks and sizzles as the fire sweeps through the trees.

It's interesting that the fire stays relatively low. The area being burned has some young longleaf pines, but the fire isn't well-fueled by their thick bark, so the flames don't appear to rise above fifteen to twenty feet in most areas. Watching the flames race through the trees, it's hard to think of this as a "controlled burn." To my monkey mind, it's a forest fire. "Get out," it says at first. A raging, out of control forest fire must be terrifying, and I have renewed respect for the crew.

During a controlled burn, wind is a constant concern; it can change the fire's direction in a second. Angie is constantly assessing wind speed and direction. In addition, a crew member tells me that "fire makes its own weather," especially fires larger than the one here today. A fire can create its own wind, build thunderheads, and even develop rotation, like a tornado. It's a sobering thought, and it makes the fire seem alive, capable of menace.

After several hours, the fire has cleared the understory, and the smoke slowly drifts away. What remains looks like a post-apocalyptic no man's land in shades of black and white and gray. The forest is charred except for the uppermost branches. I notice a canny red-tailed hawk in a tree on the unburned side of the road, eating something that fled the flames.

I ask Angie how the Conservancy identifies former longleaf forests in need of restoration. "That's usually pretty easy to determine," she says, and points toward a thick understory. "For example, I can look in there and find wiregrass. I know that wiregrass only grows in longleaf savannas, so those sorts of things are indicators." The Conservancy also tests the soil and conducts biological surveys to confirm that an area is suitable for restoration.

"Longleaf restoration involves more than replanting trees. Longleaf is an ecosystem, and one of the most biodiverse in the world." All the understory plants in the longleaf savannas, like wiregrass, pitcher plants, Venus flytrap, golden sedge, and native orchids like the pale grass pink and spring lady's tress, rely on fire to thrive.

I scan the smoldering forest. "So how long does it take, for the natural understory to come back?" I ask.

Angie's eyes light up and she gives a little half smile. "It'll start greening up soon. Come back in eight weeks."

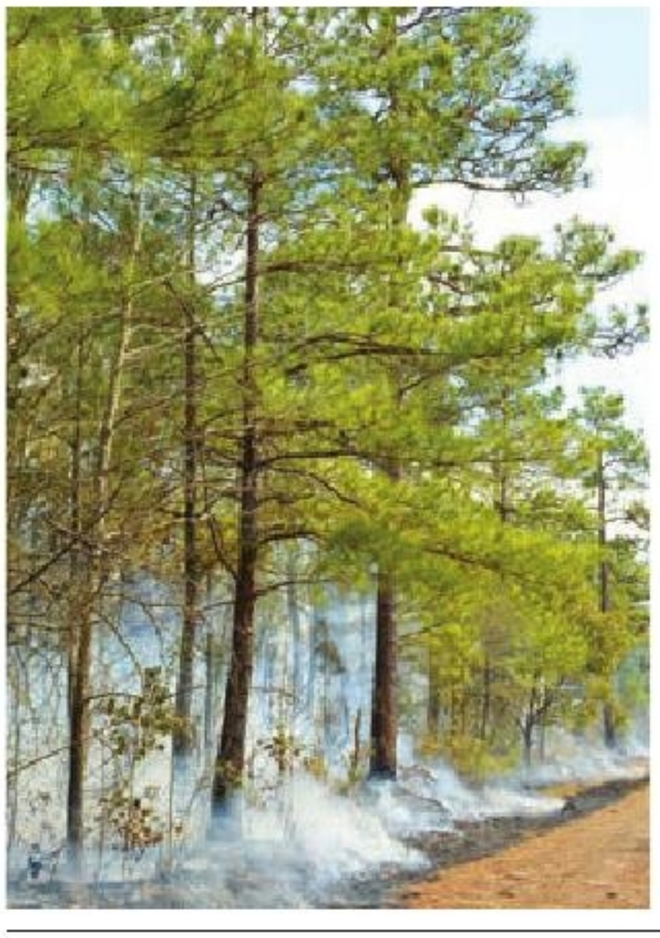
Two months later I return at dawn to the McLean site. The wiregrass has sprouted, and throughout the savanna there are pitcher plants, and not just a few — hundreds upon hundreds of vivid green stalks carpet the understory. Orchids also dot the landscape — delicate pink, a riot of white spirals, blood red. It's a landscape transformed, and it was lurking beneath the scrub all along, waiting to be cured by fire.

If you want to read more about the history of longleaf pine in the South, read Lawrence Early's excellent book, *Looking for Longleaf,* and Janisse Ray's memoir, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood.*

Thanks to Angie Carl and forester Johnny Stowe for providing historical context.

To walk in newer longleaf forests, stroll the Flytrap Trail at Carolina Beach State Park, or hike the public trail at Brunswick County's Green Swamp Preserve.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington and occasionally guides with Kayak Carolina.



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Labor Day Weekend

For the length of the beach, mullets rode the tide.
In a rambunctious flurry, gulls and terns dove toward
their glittering version of lunch, while pelicans settled
to rock in the waves after eating their fill. On the shore,

a man drew in a casting net containing three immaculate fish,
silver in brilliant sunlight – the gesture like something biblical.
I waded into the water, which was unusually clear – a scatter
of shells beside my toes, a slurry of sand as a flounder shifted,

relocating farther from my feet. My body became a buoy
in the waves. The mullets – some the size of a finger,
others the length of a luncheon plate – wove around me
as if I didn't exist, angled downward as they turned

toward deeper water. I've read that these fish skim plankton,
but it seemed as if they were intent on play, like dolphins
wrangling the waves, each leap the epitome of joy.
Two days later currents shifted, no longer a trace of the fish.

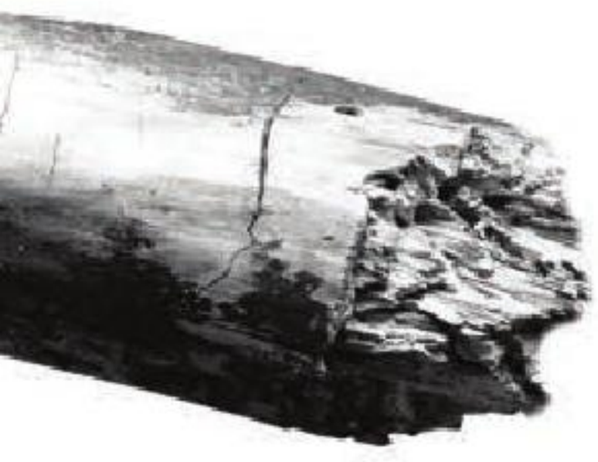
And the ocean smelled more brackish, a marsh-like tang
beneath the salt. Near noon, clouds amassed to the west,
moved toward the horizon as if it were a magnet: season's
end, or a distant hurricane siphoning bits of lesser weather.

– Lavonne J. Adams

Counting Crows

Highly intelligent and remarkably social, crows and ravens have fascinated us across the ages

By Nan Graham



The crow: rascal, pest, scavenger, omen of death, noisemaker, literary inspiration, prankster, user of tools, loudmouth, clown, nuisance, messenger, Halloween ornament. Often associated with the underworld and witchcraft, the crow's image and behavior makes it the rock star of pop culture and history.

They are found everywhere. Every country has its own crows, but all belong to the genus Corvus (ravens, too). It's a bird that is many things to many people. In Japan, if you catch a crow's eye, misfortune will come. In India, the caw of a crow heralds the arrival of a guest. In Sweden, crows are known as departed spirits of murder victims. Several cultures, including Native Americans and early Greeks, believed that the crow was originally white. Apollo is said to have sent the white crow as a private investigator to spy on his lover. When the poor feathered spy returned with bad news about the lover's unfaithfulness, Apollo went ballistic and turned his fiery anger on the messenger, scorching the bird's feathers until they were dark as night.

Many of our everyday expressions and words reflect this ubiquitous bird. Tools, yoga poses, laws, even miracle creams. That crowbar, tool of the wrecking crew, the underworld and specifically, the burglar, does have one end that vaguely resembles a flattened crow's foot.

"As the crow flies" means the most direct way; that annoying cartoon bird duo Heckle and Jeckle, but both con men and professional pranksters; the crow's nest on a tall mast ship; Counting Crows, the California rock band.

One of the first poses you learn in yoga is the Bakasana, which means crow in Sanskrit. The contortion does look somewhat like a crow in profile, if you can picture standing on your hands, your body pulled up in a full tuck dive position with derrière aimed at the sky, elevated knees pulled tight against the upper arms. You will have to try this in front of a mirror to get the full effect. Frankly I

can't tell which end represents the beak and which end is the tail.

The ancients of almost every culture have assigned mystical characteristics to the black bird. The Sumerian poem *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, considered the first serious work of literature (2,500 B.C.), pre-dates the *Iliad* and the Bible and tells of the Great Flood centuries before the text on Noah's Ark. In *Gilgamesh*, after the flood, the raven is sent to scout the waters and successfully returns with a branch indicating dry land. The Bible, on the other hand, demotes the importance of the bird and says that the raven wandered and found no place to land. Genesis translated the successful messenger into a dove, considered a symbol of purity, while the raven, known as a carrion scavenger (declared unclean in Leviticus), is portrayed as a failure.

Why from the Reconstruction days in the South are laws for blacks called Jim Crow laws? Who was Jim Crow? Turns out that there was a real performer long before the Civil War named Thomas "Daddy" Rice. He was a white minstrel show performer who blackened his face with burnt cork, and danced a frantic gyration he called "Jump Jim Crow" to music.

Weel about and turn around and do jis so
Eb'ry time I weel about I jump Jim Crow.

"Daddy" was not the first to perform this minstrel show, but he was by far the most popular of the minstrels of his time. This brand of musical comedy flourished from the 1850s into the 1870s and beyond, long after "Daddy" died penniless in 1860. No one seems to know how or why the term was hijacked to label the restrictive laws toward African-Americans from the time of Appomattox extending to the era of the Civil Rights Movement.

The crow flies in a different direction. Our aging faces sport those fine "laugh lines" at the outer edges of our eyes. No escape for this crow . . . crow's feet are as ubiquitous, of course, as the bird itself.

Crows have been the superstars of literature for thousands of years: In Aesop's Fables the crow often got the lead role. "The Crow and the Pitcher" is one of the best known. The fable tells of a thirsty crow who sees a pitcher half full of water. He tries but cannot reach the water with his beak. He flies off and returns with a large pebble and drops it in the pitcher. He continues to add one stone at a time until the water reaches drinking level.

A recent experiment proved that Aesop knew cognitive behavior even though he couldn't spell it. Using four crows named Cook, Connelly, Fry and Monroe, a scientist put out a cylindrical beaker of water, a tantalizing worm floating on top just out of reach for the crow's beak. Alongside was a pile of stones. The scientist recorded each crow's response.

Connelly proved the smartest and quickest of the quartet. He quickly put pebble after pebble into the beaker until it rose to just the exact height to retrieve the hors d'oeuvre. Cook and Monroe were good, with one figuring that larger stones meant a quicker return on his efforts and fewer trips to the beaker. Fry opted out. He had complaints about the delectability of the worm offering and issues about the stones. He retreated to the farthest corner of his cage to calm his nerves and was removed from further experiments.

The Greeks recognized the crow's reasoning ability and use of tools to solve a problem a good two millennia before this recent experiment. We now know that crows have one of the smallest brains in the bird world, but have the greatest intelligence of any of their kind, comparable with the IQ of the ape family.

In 1993, scientists recorded crows using tools in Auckland, Caledonia, solving three-step problems that apes have yet to figure out. In Japan, crows have been recorded putting nuts on the highway, retreating to the safety of the road shoulder, waiting for a car to pass and, when all is clear, scurrying to the road to get the meat from the shells. In downtown Kyoto, the more sophisticated Corvus brothers wait for the traffic light to stop the cars before racing out to put the nuts under the stopped wheel. Then they hustle back to the curb and wait. After the traffic has gone again and the light has changed back to red, the crows quickstep to the opened nuts to retrieve the food. Mission accomplished, they hotfoot it back before the light changes back to green.

The popularity of the crow and the raven became something of a cult in 19th century England. Eccentrics owned them; authors wrote about them. Lord Byron, always given to excess, traveled "with ten horses, eight enormous dogs, five cats, an eagle, a crow and a falcon."

My first reading experience was *Johnny Crow's Garden*, which I really didn't read but memorized. It was a lovely turn-of-the-century book with line illustrations reminiscent of John Tenniel's for *Alice in Wonderland*. I bonded with that feathered fictional hero and have had a thing for the clever crows and ravens ever since.

Charles Dickens was also a fan of the family Corvidae. He kept a pet raven named Grip. The raven is the supersized edition of our common crow. He has a literary claim few birds can match, starring in both novel and poem.

Dickens' bird was a talkative trickster with an extensive vocabulary and a favorite member of the family menagerie. Grip was a lively one. He popped champagne corks, loudly harangued passing horses and had an extensive vocabulary complete with expletives. But in the spring of 1841 Grip unwisely drank white paint and became ill. According to the author — though he was writing to a friend and it is difficult to tell when he is joking — the raven was prescribed castor oil by the family physician and rallied for a day or so before the end. Dickens reported that at one point the bird recovered sufficiently to bite the unfortunate groom who tended the family pets.

Dickens wrote that Grip rambled on for a bit about the disposition of his personal property, including some prized shiny keys and the location of a halfpence buried in the yard. At last the bird barked, staggered and cried "Halloa old girl" — his frequent and favorite expression — then keeled over dead.

Dickens suspected fowl play. Possibly his raven had been poisoned, he wrote, mentioning a few likely suspects among his friends and neighbors who had found his bird less than charming. Grip's body was sent to Mr. Herring's school of anatomy for an autopsy.

There is no doubting Dickens' affection for the rascally raven. He had a taxidermist preserve his pet with arsenic and mount it in a shadow box. Dickens kept the bird in his study for the rest of his life.

The Dickens children persuaded their father to include the late lamented Grip in the novel *Barnaby Rudge*, which he was writing at the time. Years later, when Dickens' possessions were auctioned after his death, Colonel Richard A. Gimbel of the department store family recognized Grip's contribution to literature and put in the winning bid for the arsenic-embalmed raven. In 1971 the Philadelphia Library was given the literary curiosity, which has since been declared a Literary Landmark by the American Library Association.

Almost penniless, dealing with his wife's failing health, struggling as a literary critic, Edgar Allan Poe reviewed Dickens' latest book, *Barnaby Rudge*. He criticized Dickens for the novelist's failure to maximize the use of the raven character in this new book.

Poe couldn't shake the image of Dickens' raven, nor his grief over the loss of his young wife. He created a poem in which a distraught poet, startled by the arrival of a raven at the study window, asks the bird to reveal his name: The bird only speaks a single word, "Nevermore." The speaker questions the bird about the possibility of seeing his lost love again and about recovery from his loss. Every question is answered with same word, "Nevermore."

Will I ever find peace, the poet asks (naturally in more poetic words)?

"Nevermore."

Will I ever forget the lost Lenore: "Nevermore."

Leave me alone, the poet cries: "Nevermore."

Poe received the handsome sum of nine dollars for the publication of "The Raven," which became one of the most popular poems in literature.

Poe, and, by association, Dickens' Grip, lead us to the sports world. Since 1998, the mascot of the Baltimore Ravens football team is, of course, a raven named Poe, for the author who died in that city. So will Grip, the outrageous bird who inspired both Dickens and Poe 170-plus years ago, be forgotten? I think . . . Nevermore.

Crossing back over the Atlantic, perhaps even as the crow flies, to the United Kingdom, where six ravens must always be present at the Tower of London. Legend has it that the kingdom and the White Tower will fall if the ravens leave. It is said that Charles II insisted that the ravens be protected when the monarchy was restored after Cromwell. During WWII the ravens all died from the stress of the blitzkrieg, but were quickly replaced.

More recently, security had to be beefed up at the Tower of London after a fox snatched Grip and Jubilee, named respectively for Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge* character and in honor of the Queen's lengthy reign. The fox swooped down as they were being put in their cage for the night, ran off and devoured them by the tower wall. Fortunately, the splendidly named Raven Master keeps two benchwarmer crows on standby for just such an emergency. They have been named Grip and Jubilee after the two dearly departed avian icons. The Brits do not cotton to change. Besides, the English throne must never be in jeopardy. The ravens will live out their lives like a few other bird-brained members of the royal family.

The fashion scene has not taken much note of the common crow. While other bird feathers rode high on modish hats at the turn of the century, to the extent that certain species became endangered, the crow flew well under the vogue radar. But there was a scene in the film *Gigi*, where Louis Jourdan introduces Leslie Caron (as Gigi) to Parisian high society as his future mistress. She wears a spectacular white satin ball gown designed by Cecil Beaton. You only have to see it once to recall it.

His fashion sketch featured black ribbons on each shoulder of the ball gown, but the dressmaker mistook the ribbons for black birds and made up the muslin model with the birds on the shoulders. Beaton was so taken with the idea that he translated it into the finished dress. The black bird dress was partly responsible for Beaton winning the 1958 Oscar for Costume Design and is considered one of the most memorable costumes in film. Over the years, some brides have copied the dress for their wedding gowns, birds and all.

In 20th century politics, the crow was part of a tremendous upset victory over a Republican candidate in the 1948 presidential elections. The press, including *The New York Times*, didn't give Democrat Harry S. Truman a prayer to win the presidency against popular Republican opponent Thomas E. Dewey. Morning headlines screamed the results of the race. "Dewey: The Next President of the United States!" *Chicago Times* ran the headline. *Life* magazine ran the headline. *The Washington Post* ran the headline. Votes came in and were counted. Democrat Truman won over Republican Dewey.

The Washington Post, showed gracious good humor in sending a message to the newly elected President Truman: He was invited to a dinner in which the entire newspaper staff would wear sackcloth and ashes to "eat crow." The president, in white tie, would be served turkey. Truman declined with equal grace. "We should all get together now and make a country in which everybody can eat turkey whenever they please."

Remember the terrifying scene in Hitchcock's *The Birds*, when a murder of crows (yes, that is their collective noun), swooped down on the terrified schoolchildren who were racing to escape? Of course you do. Just put yourself in that scenario the next time you hear the unmistakable sound of crows that can count. And while you're at it, maybe reach for a bottle of your grandfather's favorite bourbon — a calming shot of Old Crow, of course.

The Shadow of The Crow

By Gwenyfar Rohler

More than twenty years after an unspeakable tragedy on a Wilmington film set, actor Brandon Lee's life – and death – live on in a film that has achieved cult immortality

We live in an accolade-seeking culture, such that when a writer calls to ask for an interview, the customary response is immediately and overwhelmingly positive.

Heavy sighs followed by silence are not the norm.

Unless you are writing a story about *The Crow*, filmed in Wilmington in the spring of 1993.

Then you will get a long, heavy silence followed by some variation of:

"You know everyone who worked on that movie still carries a piece of it with them . . ."

During this silence, I know the person I am talking with is replaying one of the worst nights of their life and the months of hell that followed. They are seeing 28-year-old actor Brandon Lee's body fall on the set, they are hearing a fatal gun shot – which should have been a blank – coming hard on the heels of the reminder, "Don't aim at Brandon!" They are watching the on-set medic work furiously to bring him back twice while waiting for the ambulance, and then they are sitting for hours in an emergency room – the crew, en masse, holding vigil at the hospital.

"I remember it happened around Easter . . ." Beth Giles ventured when I asked her about it. The parallels between the timing of the holiday, the theme of the film and the accident meld into yet another eerie coincidence with an actor and a film whose legacy is freighted with the material that conspiracy theorists love.

The Crow is the film adaptation of a comic book by James O'Barr. Eric Draven, a rock musician played by Brandon Lee, is murdered on the same night his fiancée is brutally raped and killed. One year later, Draven returns from the dead to avenge their deaths. The art direction is phenomenal: a stylized comic book universe that is somehow hyper-realistic to the point of gritty and yet so beautifully rendered it looks like manga pages flashing on the screen before you. Designed by Alex McDowell, the film looks like Tim Burton's *Batman* on steroids. Then there is the soundtrack: The Cure, The Jesus and Mary Chain, Rage Against the Machine, Helmet and Nine Inch Nails are but a few of the artists used to flesh out the soundscape of a film whose main character was a guitarist before he was killed by thugs. "It's my favorite movie," the friend who loaned me the DVD said. Once I saw it I understood why it has achieved such cult status: It's not just because Brandon Lee died while making it – the film is very, very good.

But it is inescapable that the film remains a cult fascination (some would say cinematic obsession) because Brandon Lee, the son of martial arts star Bruce Lee, was shot to death while filming at the studio on Twenty-third Street in Wilmington. That was March 31, 1993. Right around Easter, as Giles remembers.

"I was fifteen feet, maybe." Script supervisor Cornelia Rogan recalls the night. "We were facing Brandon. He was coming in through the door, and the last words that were said were, 'Don't aim at Brandon. The camera can't see.'" Meaning that the gun should be pointed off to the side of Brandon Lee, that what would show up on film would be off-angle enough to look realistic.

You are going to ask: What scene were they filming? It was the one where Lee walks in to find a

gang attacking his fiancée. Fun Boy, played by Michael Massee, has a .44 Magnum and shoots Lee's character, Draven. This is a movie set; the gun was supposed to be loaded with blanks. But there were a series of mistakes leading up to this. Among them, the weapons master had been sent home, and the gun was prepared by an inexperienced props assistant who did not properly check the weapon, which had been used earlier and still had a dummy bullet in it. The result was the dummy bullet getting fired with the force from a powder charge behind it (giving it the power of a real bullet) into Lee's abdomen from a distance of less than fifteen feet.

Rogan recalls standing next to the on-set medic, Clyde Baisey, when Lee fell. "He [Baisey] was the one who realized this had gone on too long, that it was not acting. It was within heartbeats — he leapt — I'm telling you, he vaulted over that table and got to him." With lightning-quick efficiency, Baisey had people dispatched for medical supplies and called 911. The crew moved to the back wall of the soundstage to give Baisey room to work. As Lee flat-lined the second time, and Baisey worked furiously to revive him, people began to wonder, what was taking the ambulance so long?

With lights flashing, the ambulance was held up at the security gate and couldn't get on the studio lot. Key grip Chunky Huse dispatched his grip crew with instruction to get the ambulance to the soundstage even if they had to chain-saw the security arms off the gate to do it.

A little over six hours later, at 1 p.m., Lee was pronounced dead at New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

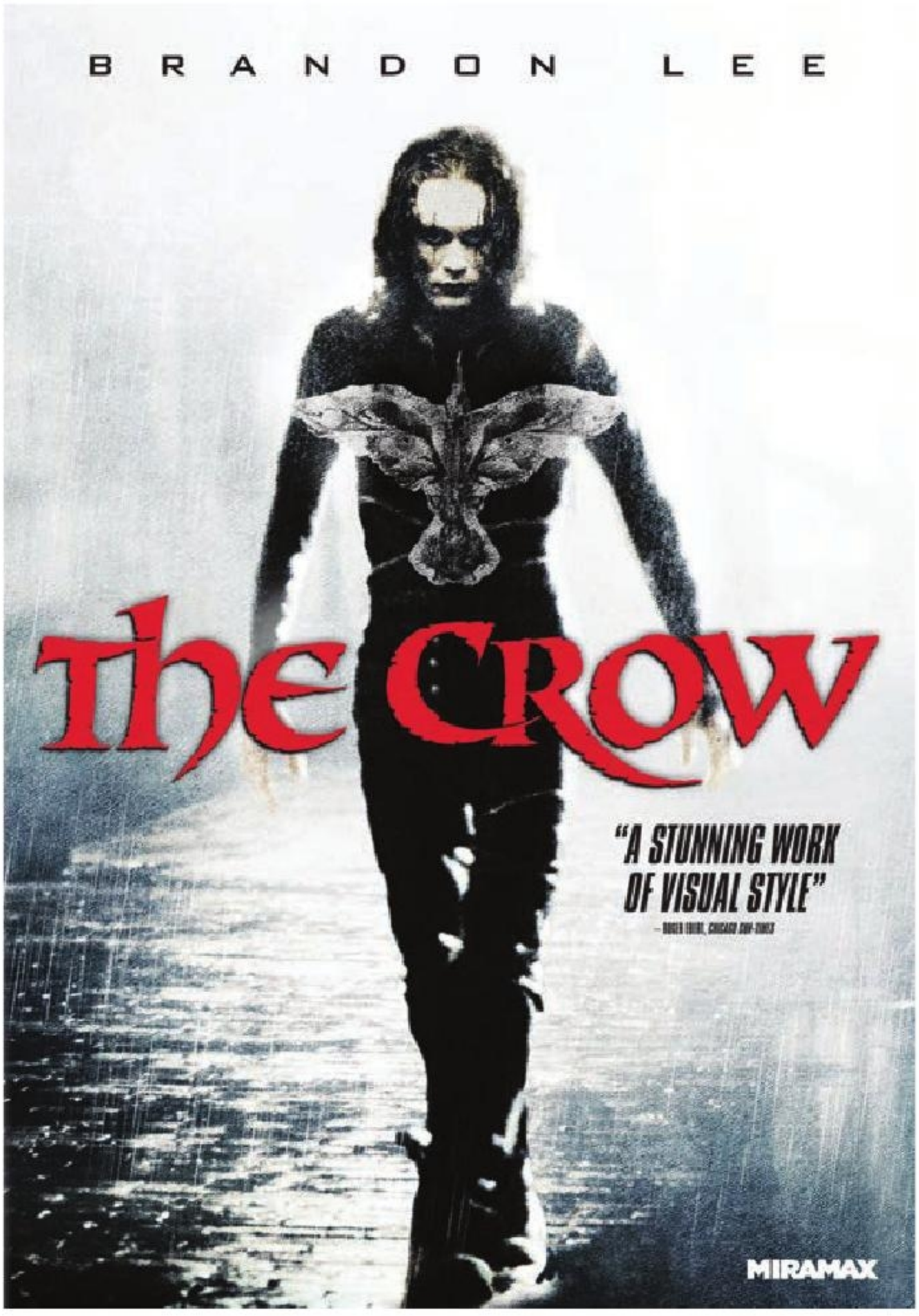
Meanwhile, one of the camera assistants had the foresight to take the film out of the camera, put it in the canisters and tape them shut. "Don't develop this," he told the producers when they arrived at the set. Instead, the film was locked in a vault until being turned over to the police as evidence in the investigation; it was later destroyed. Just imagine if it had gone to lab and someone had struck a second print that happened to make its way on to a cable news channel?

The investigation eventually ruled the shooting an accident, and no criminal charges were filed in the matter of Lee's unnecessary and untimely death.

Then the phone call came.

There was some newly developing technology that might make it possible to finish the film. If they could get a frame of film with the right angles and proportions for Lee's face, they could use that image with a body double. As the script supervisor, and therefore the responsible party for continuity, Rogan sat down with the director to find a usable image.

"Some of the people didn't come back," Rogan admits. But many were invested in the film and wanted to see it finished. What better way to honor Lee than to finish the film he died making? In May 1994, *The Crow* finally came to the big screen. Watching it, knowing what happened, and watching Lee die over and over again in the film's flashback scenes is a distressing experience at best. Seeing the title card dedicating the film to "Brandon and Eliza" can only fill one with a flood of conflicting emotions. They were two weeks away from a wedding in Mexico. Instead, Eliza Hutton buried her fiancé next to his father in Seattle, Washington.



An ancient belief holds that when someone dies, a crow carries their soul to the land of the dead. But sometimes, something so bad happens that a terrible sadness is carried with it and the soul can't rest. Then sometimes, just sometimes, the crow can bring that soul back to put the wrong things right.

The movie lives on, and Brandon Lee with it.

THE GHOST OF THE Hotel Orton

At America's oldest pool hall, a newcomer meets one of the Port City's most celebrated spirits

By Skip Maloney

COURTESY OF THE NEW HANOVER COUNTY LIBRARY, DR. FALES COLLECTION.

Ghost stories are as old as civilization. In the first century, in one of his many published letters offering vivid accounts of life in the Roman Empire, Pliny the Elder wrote of the ghost of an old man with a long beard, rattling chains and haunting his house in Athens.

Shakespeare's King Hamlet appears on stage to goad his son, the Prince of Denmark, to revenge. Jacob Marley rattles his chains and disturbs the sleep of Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Sam (Patrick Swayze) dies, but comes back to save Molly (Demi Moore) from the clutches of his murderer in Bruce Joel Rubin's *Ghost* (1990).

What these varied accounts have in common is their assertion that ghosts exhibit a human form that we can actually see, and that are capable of human actions.

There's a problem, though. Based on what we know about human cognition, how can entities without a physical brain process information that would allow them to see the world, hear its sounds, smell its aromas, taste its foods or touch its objects? And how are we, here in the real world, able to see, hear or touch something (not sure we'd want to smell or taste it) which, by definition, lacks the ability to reflect light, create sound waves or exhibit a concrete physical existence?

Not long after I moved to Wilmington, from Nyack, New York, in 2007, I initiated an Internet search for directions to Orton's Bar, where I was to shoot pool with the American Poolplayers Association team I had joined. In addition to directions, I found Orton's reputation as the oldest pool hall in America, and Wilmington's reputation as a haunted city, reportedly stuffed with ghosts who roamed the *USS North Carolina*, showed up at Orton's Bar and spooked shoppers at the Cotton Exchange. I didn't think too much about it at the time. I

noted the directions, closed the laptop and went to shoot pool.

The blackened concrete walls and steps leading down to Orton's Bar on Front Street exude a not-so-subtle feel of a descent into hell. The basement bar, though spacious enough, is unlikely to be patronized by anyone prone to claustrophobia, and it's clear from the moment you walk in that this place is old. The brick flooring near a darts room dates back to Orton's origins as a laundry room/barber shop/pool hall in Wilmington's first five-star establishment. The hand-carved wooden sign over one of the Brunswick/Olhausen pool tables commemorates Willie Mosconi, the shark who set a straight pool record of 365 balls on that table on November 13, 1953. My first few minutes in the place felt like a step back in time.

So there I was, practicing at one of those tables, when I happened to look up and see a strange-looking older man standing between the tables and the bar. He was wearing what looked like tan woolen pants held up with old-fashioned button suspenders, and a flannel shirt. He had longish hair, which wasn't odd in and of itself, but it looked as though it hadn't seen a brush in weeks. I turned back to the table to take a shot, and within a matter of seconds, looked back to take a second glance at this guy.

He was gone. I swiveled my head around, figuring he'd moved to another part of the bar. The time between my first and second look had not been sufficient for him to get out the door without my seeing, at least, his back. I didn't think it had been sufficient for him to have gone into the other part of the bar, separated from my vantage point by a wall, but I put down my pool cue and looked anyway. Still gone. Didn't give it another thought and went back to pool. Only later, when I renewed my Internet exploration about Wilmington's varied and plentiful ghost stories, did I come across tales surrounding the Ghost of the Hotel Orton. I shivered slightly, realizing that I might have actually witnessed my first disembodied spirit.

Curiosity led me to the public library's History Room, where I initiated research into the events surrounding the ghost in Orton's bar. In January of 1949, a fire started in a first floor shop below the Hotel Orton (the hotel's declining fortunes, fueled by more modern hotels in the area, had led to leasing of the ground floors) and burned the building to its foundations. Local legends, promoted by tourist websites, indicated that a man named Willie Stephens, a prostitute and a piano player had all died in the fire, which was why one of them — Willie — continued to haunt the bar.

A report filed by the Associated Press on the day after the fire, however, indicated that no one had died. According to the report, all forty or so hotel guests had been successfully evacuated and that, aside from a few firemen treated for smoke inhalation, no one was injured. The *Wilmington Star-News* managed a brief report on the morning after the fire, and like the AP report, noted the absence of any significant injuries or deaths. Subsequent reports focused on damage estimates, but little else.

Now I was really intrigued. Did someone die in that fire or not? I went back to the website where I'd first read about the ghost and found a phone number, hoping I could track the source, learn where the information about Willie and the others had come from. What I got was a royal run-around. They hemmed, they hawed, they had to "look into it" and get back to me. Within a matter of days, I discovered that all statements regarding deaths associated with the fire had been removed from the site, although they clung tenaciously to the continuing presence of Willie in the pool room.

Later I would learn that my research into the event had not taken into account discoveries that were made weeks after the fire, suggesting that bodies were, in fact, recovered from the wreckage of the hotel. By then, though, my interest in researching the event and the deaths that presumably resulted came to a halt, as my imagination took over, creating a fictitious reason for the absence of information regarding the deaths of Willie, the prostitute and the piano player. A story began to emerge, and almost immediately, it began to take shape.

Inevitably, this fictional tale addresses the contradictions surrounding our awareness of ghosts. I wasn't interested in paranormal investigations or in conjuring up the image of a dangerous ghost intent on revenge and threatening the well-being of local citizens. What drew and continues to draw my attention is the reconciliation of what we know, and what we can only presume, about disembodied spirits.

Through my lens, Willie is a disembodied spirit who, true to my own awareness of human cognition, can't speak (no voice box), hear (no ears), smell (no nose), or taste (no tongue). He can, however, through an unknowable process, reach out with what I've assumed is a concentrated body of energy and physically touch a live human being, with remarkable force, as it turns out. He can also be heard through a communicative process that speaks directly with our brains, bypassing our ears. He can be seen, but again, only through a process that deals directly with one living brain at a time, which is why, for the most part, he's seen by only one person at a time. The dim, disembodied image we all associate with ghosts is, I postulate, a product of our minds, not an actual, three-dimensional image with weight and mass.

My narrator, a reporter for a fictitious Wilmington daily newspaper, asks Willie questions about these basic functions, and discovers that Willie doesn't have a clue how any of it works and doesn't care, either.

"Damn place doesn't come with an instruction manual any more than your place does," says Willie.

In other words, Willie is as conflicted in his own strange world as we are out here in ours. He is searching, the same way we are, for answers to basic questions. How did I get here? What am I doing here? Why can't I have a cigarette?

The ghost of the Hotel Orton wants the reporter to find out what happened to his girlfriend — not a prostitute; a Russian immigrant named Melissa Katyarov. Unbeknownst to Willie, Melissa came here in 1949 to settle in as the wife in a Russian sleeper cell, assigned to monitor activity at the shipyard on the outskirts of town. When WWII ended, and up to the point of the Hotel Orton fire, Wilmington's shipbuilding facility had ceased operations, and until they opted to create the shipping port facility in 1950, it was abandoned. The young woman befriends Willie, a Navy corpsman, in hopes of obtaining information about the shipyard, but eventually realizes that she wants to escape the sleeper cell and go away with Willie. Her plans are discovered and when she and Willie meet at the Hotel Orton to consider their options, they are confronted by a Russian agent (Melissa's "husband"), who murders both of them, and a witness (the piano player), as well. Because it's clear they've been shot, their bodies are removed by the Russian agent, who then sets fire to the hotel, assuming that is what investigators will conclude since the bodies were burned to dust. The agent also assumes, mistakenly, that the two were registered at the hotel, and that there would be a search for their bodies. But they weren't registered. Willie had a "connection" at the hotel who allowed him use of the room. This is why, I postulate, all registered guests of the hotel that night were accounted for in the subsequent investigation.

The Ghost of the Hotel Orton is very much a work in progress — the product of an imagination run wild, which continues to haunt and delight me every day. I've been back to Orton's bar several times since the night I saw what I now believe was the actual ghost of the Hotel Orton, but he is apparently not into encores. If you happen to run into him, and are lucky enough to strike up a conversation, let him know I'm out here, still looking for answers.

Last seen in TheatreNOW's production of Raney, *Skip Maloney is a Wilmington writer who, in addition to being haunted by Orton's ghost, is hoping that a play he's written detailing a fictional meeting between the Pope and a well-known liberal talk show host can be produced locally.*

Plumbnearly

Anne Carlson and her movable house

By Ashley Wahl · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

Anne Carlson does things her way. Always has, always will.

In the late 1940s, when she was working as a dormitory counselor at Greensboro's Woman's College, Carlson (then Dickinson) was engaged to a young man she'd known since childhood. Until she realized that she wanted to marry someone else — a farmer named Carl Carlson. And so she asked him.

They were married for sixty-four joyful years, until Carl died in 2013 at age 98. She has never been afraid to speak her mind or follow her heart.

On a recent September morning, 89-year-old Carlson is sitting in the living room of her Wilmington home leafing through handwritten notes and old photographs. Beyond the back windows, which we are facing, sunlight dances across the surface of the Intracoastal Waterway. Figure Eight Island is visible on the other side. From Edgewater Club Road, the drive here was something of an adventure. Winding dirt roads and wooden arrow sign posts. I want to know how on Earth she was ever able to cut in half the massive two-story clapboard house, put it on a truck and haul it 10 miles from its previous location on N.C. Highway 17. I'll find out, but only in Anne Carlson's own good time. First she is going to tell me about Duck Point.

Duck Point, nestled in a crook of Pages Creek, is the house two lots down designed to resemble a ship: "Carl's mother and father built that house," says Carlson of her late husband's parents. The way she says "house" — rhymes with "close" — stamps her as a Richmond native, but she and Carl raised their four children on the Carlson family farm in Greensboro. Built in 1948, the house on Duck Point is where the Carlsons spent summer months, dividing time with Carl's three sisters until Anne decided that she wanted her own getaway on the property — the white clapboard house we're sitting inside, but she isn't ready to talk about yet.

We aren't talking about the "twin" house yet either — the one built in 1990, located between Anne's house and the house on the point, which looks like a stucco version of this house. Oh, she's got details scribbled on a page in her notepad — that she worked with Wilmington architect Ligon Flynn when she decided to build that house, for instance — but it's a story for another time.

Back to Duck Point.

Carl's father, Dr. Carl Carlson, was a Swedish immigrant, chiropractor and an avid outdoorsman who, with his wife, Laurinda, daughter of Vicks VapoRub inventor Lunsford Richardson, frequently traveled to Europe by ship. They worked with an architect to design and build a three-story house with two levels of screened-in decks and a cozy wood-paneled interior like that of an old hunting lodge. Located on Duck Point between the waterway and Pages Creek, the house would have the effect of being right on the water. That was the vision. But when the architect laid the foundation, says Carlson, instead of situating it out on the point, the house was facing the sound.

"She was very upset," says Carlson of her late mother-in-law, "but I think the house turned out OK. You can still see the creek. And it's still like a boat. It's just not the way she wanted."

Carl's parents spent spring and fall months at Duck Point and let their children use it come summer.

"We had so many happy memories in that house," says Carlson.

And rowdy weekend gatherings.

She recounts the time an entire squash casserole spilled out onto the floor of the butler's pantry — "where everybody came in with their sandy feet" — when she and Tommy Ravenel were on kitchen duty.

"The dish was so hot that it bent the wire holder while we were carrying it from the kitchen to the dining room," says Carlson. Since nobody else saw the spill, "we ran into the kitchen, got the spatula and started scooping it back into the dish."

People raved about that squash casserole all night, says Carlson, letting out a snigger. "They even asked for the recipe."

She laughs again, this time harder.

"You know it had to have been a little gritty. They ate every morsel."

The Carlson children have fond memories of Duck Point too, especially of Captain Sam, the hired help whose spirit is as much a part of Duck Point as the salty air.

Sam Aldridge was a former tobacco farmer who got his captain's license when Carl's father bought *The Viking*, a small yacht. He also captained *The Higgins*, the boat used for fishing, water skiing and day trips over to Figure Eight Island, which, pre-bridge, the children assumed they owned.

Katie, Anne's oldest child and only daughter, recalls how Sam used to "pop oysters straight from the sand," shuck them with his old pocket knife and slurp them raw.

"He was the most magnificent being," says Steve, Anne's middle son. "Whether you were a governor or the lowliest field hand, it didn't matter to Captain Sam. You came in with a clean slate."

Before sunrise, when he wanted to take them fishing, Sam woke the Carlson boys by pinching their toes.

They say he must have taught a thousand people how to water ski.

"Carl's daddy built a house for him over on the creek," says Carlson, who recalls the fresh scallops Sam would harvest at 5 o'clock in the morning.

"We'd cook them up for lunch," she says. Like the children, she speaks about Sam as if he were a myth. "I haven't really liked seafood since he died."

I gently remind Carlson that this is a story about the house she moved by asking her why, instead of building a new house, she decided to haul a 19th century Colonial-style farmhouse to the Carlson family property for summer getaways when Duck Point was available to share.

Her answer is immediate and matter-of-fact.

"Somehow I ended up becoming everybody's housekeeper," says Carlson, whose devotion to tidiness is surpassed only by her love of Georgian antiques. "I got tired of it."

And in her words: "Building something new is just not the same as finding an old house and moving it. So I set out to look for one."

At this point, unusual as it may seem, Carlson had earned a reputation for moving houses. She'd moved four structures in Greensboro, and would eventually have the historic Gant-McAlister House behind First Presbyterian Church relocated to the grounds of her Fisher Park antique shop, which she ran for thirty-six years.

"It's so easy," says Carlson.

She was taking the children to Shields Ice Cream parlor in the North 17 Shopping Center when she looked up and saw her future beach house.

"I thought, 'Oh, that's perfect.'"

And so she pulled into the drive and knocked on the door.

A Mrs. Rosa Pearsall answered.

"Excuse me," said Anne Carlson, "but would you be interested in selling this house?"

"I would," Mrs. Pearsall replied.

Carlson offered $5,000.

"What about $15,000?" asked Mrs. Pearsall.

Deal made, Carlson found a company in Kenansville to cut off the second floor and load the house onto a trailer.

"We carried the pine floors with us," recalls Carlson.

Chimneys (two of three) and fireplaces (four of six) would be reconstructed.

Carlson finds a black and white photograph of a section of the house being pulled down the road.

"Isn't it pitiful?" she says with a delightful laugh.

When she and Carl arrived to see the house on the foundation, they discovered it, too, had been placed onto the property backward, front door facing the waterway.

Not one to suffer in silence, Carlson was on the phone within minutes of finding out about what had happened.

"I called and they turned it around for one hundred dollars," she says.

In addition to taking off the porch to let in more natural light, the Carlsons extended the house by fourteen feet, adding a glass wall along the back to take advantage of the view.

"I copied these glass walls from the Yacht Club," says Carlson.

Despite being a farmhouse, the house was built by someone who clearly understood scale and grace. The widow's walk had "cocktail party" written all over it, and original floor-to-ceiling windows in the parlors are part of what drew Carlson to this house in the first place. Ditto the wide pine floors and mahogany banister. But Carlson thought the newel post was "hideous."

Big. Square. Unsightly.

She had it dismantled, put on a lathe and reshaped.

Décor has remained virtually unchanged since Carlson decorated nearly forty years ago: apricot valances; *Gone With the Wind* wallpaper in the foyer; antique English hardware and chandeliers.

Conversation starters include a built-in cabinet once mistaken for a bathtub, doors and mantel salvaged from a roadside in Greensboro, and oak paneling from the Guilford County Courthouse, which Carlson painted white.

Anne Carlson doesn't make it down to Wilmington much anymore.

"This is going to be my last time," she says, not dramatically but with a certain grave finality.

"You say that every time," quips daughter Katie.

Katie and two of her brothers, Carl III and Chris, co-own this house now.

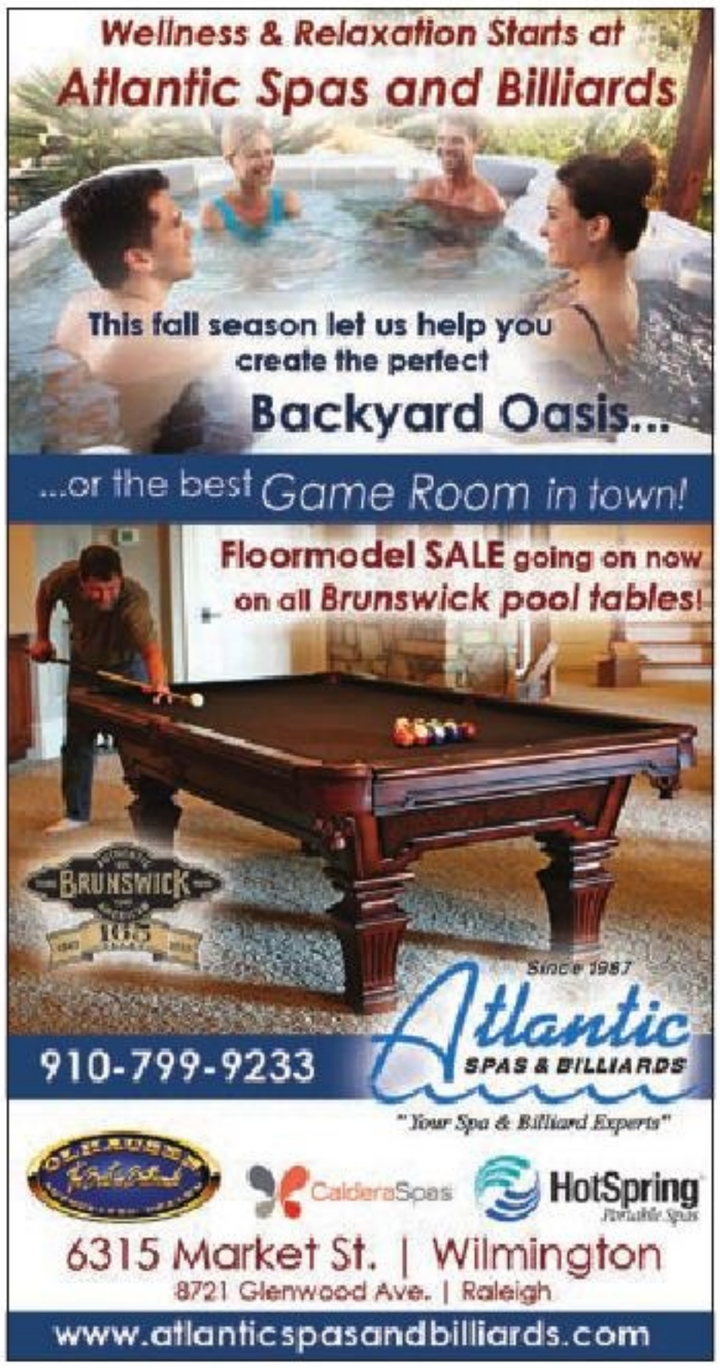
Steve and his wife, also named Anne Carlson, own the house next door.

Eric and Mary Calhoun, cousins of the Carlson kids, live in the house at Duck Point.

From the widow's walk, there is an uninterrupted view of the waterway and the entire Carlson family compound.

As Carl used to say, welcome to Plumbnearly.

"Plumb out of town and nearly out of the United States," Carlson laughs. "Maybe I'll come back one more time. Isn't it just great out here?"



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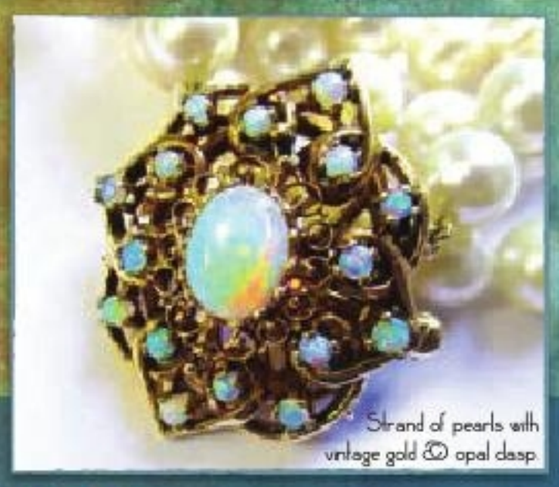

OPAL is the birthstone for October. Considered a traditional gift for the 14th wedding anniversary, some believe that this fiery stone not only releases inhibitions, but it can inspire both love and passion. A precious gem treasured since antiquity, we have a number of incredible examples available in our cases now.

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ALMANAC

October

By Rosetta Fawley

Love and Prophecy

Traditionally, October has two birthstones: opal and tourmaline. Some say that the tradition of birthstones originates in the Breastplate of Aaron described in Exodus, the twelve stones corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel and so to the months of the year. Our modern lists don't accord all that closely with the ancient descriptions, but that's OK – according to astrologers, the color of the gem is the important thing.

Like autumn leaves, tourmaline comes in a wide variety of shades, and many individual stones are multicolored. They can even change color depending on whether they are viewed in natural or artificial light.

Egyptian legend denotes that tourmaline passed through a rainbow as it came up through the Earth, and that was how it came to be so many-hued. Wear tourmaline for enduring love and friendship. Your birthday doesn't have to be in October.

Opals are also kaleidoscopic, but their colors hide in their depths. Bedouins believed that the stones fell from the sky in flashes of lightning. The ancient Greeks thought that one wearing opals would have the gift of prophecy and that the stones warded away disease. The Romans considered them symbolic of purity and hope.

Blondes, regardless of what month you were born, invest in some opal hair ornaments – it is said that opals maintain the color of golden locks.

Apple Time is Here

It's the last month of apple harvest in western North Carolina. Make the most of it. Look out for apples at the farmers market, or stop by an orchard if you're going to the mountains. American varieties being harvested this month include the Arkansas Black, Stayman and North Carolina's own King Luscious. Arkansas Black and Stayman are thought to have developed in the mid-19th century from the Eastern states' Winesap apple.

The Arkansas Black apple is a sumptuous dark red color. Crisp and delicious when first picked, it can be stored for months. Its flavor mellows with keeping and its skin darkens to black, hence the name. Eat it fresh, cook it or juice it for cider. The Stayman is a dual-purpose variety, popular for eating and baking. Word is it makes superb apple butter.

King Luscious is the newcomer to the party, having been discovered near Hendersonville in 1935. It is an eating apple that keeps well into the winter. It's also enormous. Share it with someone.

The falling leaves
Drift by the window
The autumn leaves
Of red and gold
I see your lips
The summer kisses
The sun-burned hands
I used to hold

Since you went away
The days grow long
And soon I'll hear
Old winter's song
But I miss you most of all
My darling
When autumn leaves
Start to fall

"Autumn Leaves," Prévert/Kosma/Mercer

Hug a Farmer, Save Your Leaves

If you're struggling with your fall cover crop or coming up with ways to put off raking the leaves, give a thought to our farmers on October 12, which is National Farmers Day. No procrastinating with the mowing for them. Shop at a farm stall or visit your local farmers market to celebrate the people who bring us our food and drink, fabrics and furniture.

Speaking of raking leaves, when you've gotten around to it don't throw them away. Not only would you be unnecessarily clogging up landfill, but you would be throwing away nature's fertilizer. Fallen leaves are a treasure. Use them as mulch – shredded if possible – for flower beds and vegetable gardens, trees and shrubs. Remember not to "volcano mulch" around trees – stacking the mulch high can cause damp and disease at the base of the trunk. Up to six inches around the base is deep enough for trees and shrubs.

Thick layers of mulch between rows of plants in vegetable gardens will not only improve your yield but also give you a path to work from during wet, muddy winter weather.

Leaves can also be tilled into vegetable and flower beds. If you have sandy soil this will help with maintaining water and nutrient levels. Clay soils will have improved drainage and air supply. Work in a leaf layer of six to eight inches during the fall so that soil can maintain its natural rhythm and make the most of the decomposition process before spring planting begins.

Anne reveled in the world of color about her.

"Oh, Marilla," she exclaimed one Saturday morning, coming dancing in with her arms full of gorgeous boughs, "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers. It would be terrible if we just skipped from September to November, wouldn't it? Look at these maple branches. Don't they give you a thrill – several thrills?"

– From *Anne of Green Gables*, L.M. Montgomery.

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OCTOBER

"Qi-Gong and Mindful Movement": An Intro & Demo
Presented by Keith Webb, Certified Practice Leader, Qigong, Tai Chi Easy
Wednesday, October 21st, 2015 at 2 p.m.
Brightmore Independent Living: 2324 South 41st Street
Learn about this ancient Chinese meditative practice for overall mind and body health. Research has shown Qi-Gong (pronounced Chee) to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, relieve chronic pain, improve sleep quality, boost the immune system to prevent illness and speed recovery from injury and surgery, support health and longevity, and to provide a deep sense of peace and well-being. **RSVP by Monday, October 19th, 2015.**

"The Angel That Stands By Me": Minnie Evans' Paintings
Produced by Allie Light & Irving Saraf, Executive Producers
Tuesday, October 27th , 2015 at 2 p.m.
Brightmore Independent Living Media Room: 2324 South 41st Street
In this short Documentary, see Minnie Evans recount her visions and dreams that began at age 13 and the spiritual directive, "draw or die" she received on Good Friday in 1935. This is an amazing story of a gift from God and a woman, whose unique contributions transcend the categorization of folk, outsider or self-educated artist. See images of Minnie's semi-abstract brilliantly colored drawings, revered by art lovers around the world, all created right here by this amazingly talented Wilmington woman. **RSVP by Friday, October 23rd, 2015.**

NOVEMBER

"Walk A Mile in My Shoes": Aging & Geriatric Care Management
Presented by Sharon Luquire, RN, LNHA & Geriatric Care Manager, A Peace of Home
Monday, November 9th, 2015 at 2 p.m.
Brightmore Independent Living: 2324 South 41st Street
Join us for an interactive class in which participants are not only introduced to a variety of physiological changes related to aging, but experience them and learn more about the Geriatric Care process. **RSVP by Friday, November 6th, 2015.**

"Remembering Ms. Minnie": Minnie Evans Art Exhibit and Reception
Presented by Dr. Christian Daniel with Members of the Evans Family
Sunday, November 15th, 2015 at 3 p.m.
Brightmore Independent Living: 2324 South 41st Street
Although inspired by dreams and visions at an early age, Minnie Evans completed her first drawings at age 43. She continued her drawings and shared them with visitors from the tiny Arlie Gardens gatehouse, where she was Gatekeeper from 1948 until 1974. Her works have been shown in national and international galleries and are now held in museums, including The Smithsonian, and in private collections around the world. Join us as Dr. Christian Daniel shares his collection and knowledge of her works at this exhibit and reception, and meet the members of the Evans family. **RSVP by Friday, November 13th, 2015.**

"Fall Festival Fundraiser for Alzheimer's"
Friday, November 6th, 12 PM – 3 PM
Lawn by the Brightmore of Wilmington Campus Fountain & Pond
2320 South 41st Street
Join us for our 7th Annual Commemoration of Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Enjoy "Gemutlichkeit" — "The Best of the Best of Times" at our Oktoberfest featuring the Harbour Towne Fest Band, an authentic 15-piece Brass Band, who promise to entertain you, but have more fun than you! Enjoy German-styled fall foods, beverages, music, dancing, prizes, raffles, and more! Tickets, available at event, may be exchanged for food & festivities including opportunities to win one or more of the displayed raffle items donated by area businesses. Proceeds benefit Alzheimer's NC and support local families. **RSVP helpful by Monday, November 2nd, 2015.**

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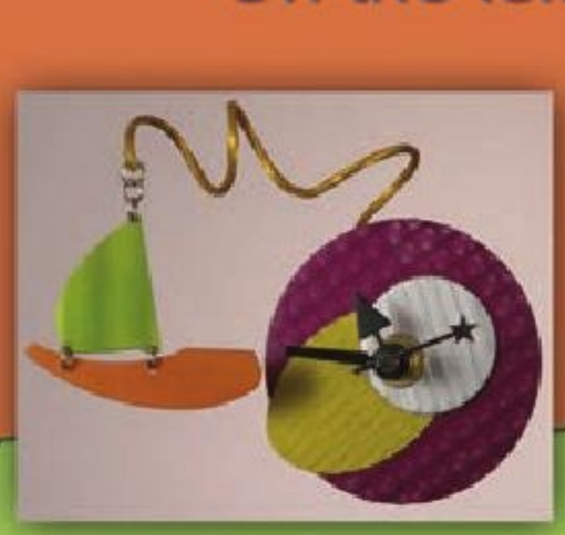

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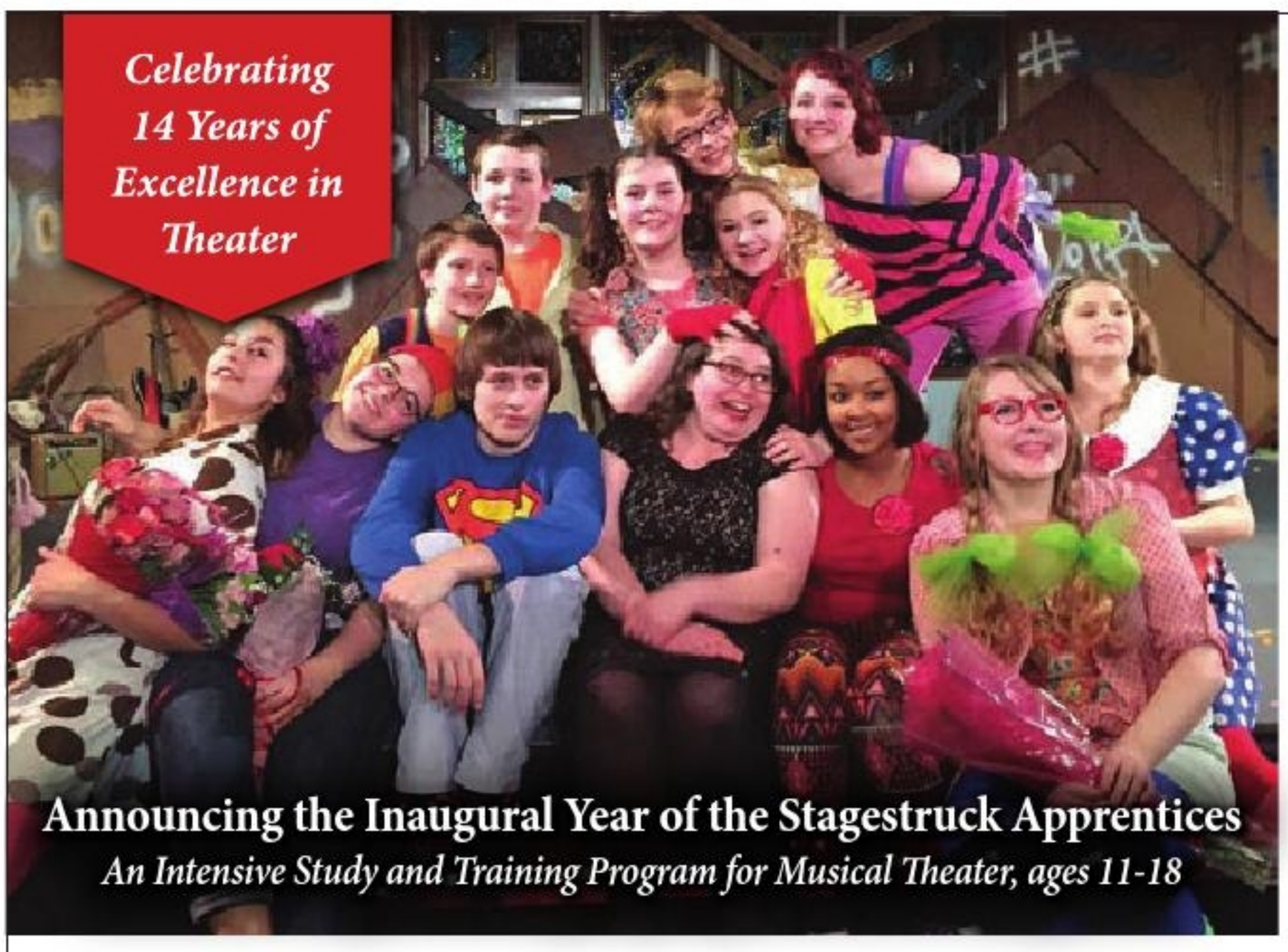

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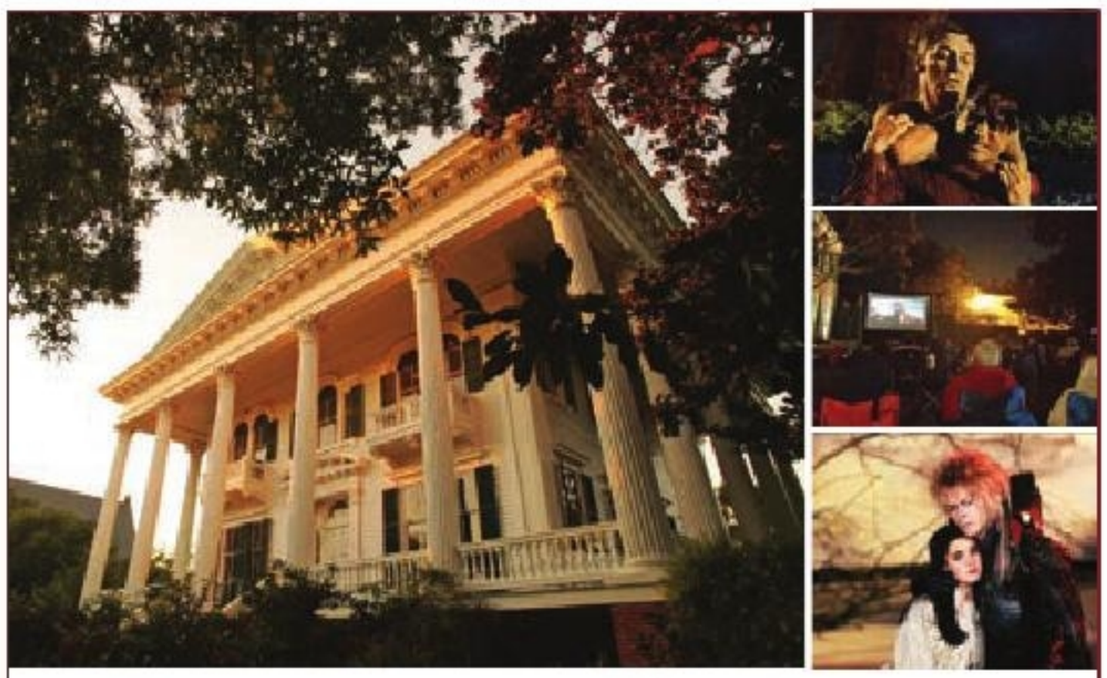

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October 2015

Arts Calendar

Sculptors Exhibition

10/2

Art in the Arboretum

10/2–4

Jazz Funeral

10/9

Star Wars Day

10/10

10/1 Jazz at the CAM
6:30–8:30 p.m. Progressive jazz from trumpeter, arranger and composer of the Al Strong Quintet. Admission: $5–12. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or cameronartmuseum.org.

10/1 Pink Ribbon Luncheon
11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch with best-selling author and breast cancer survivor Patti Callahan Henry; includes purse auction. Admission: $100. Proceeds benefit The Pink Ribbon Project. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 815-5042 or www.nhrmc.org/pinkribbon.

10/1 Pop-Up Market
2–7 p.m. Seaglass Salvage Market's pop-up market includes furniture and architectural objects (doors, windows, shutters), all begging to be repurposed. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

10/1 Opening Art Exhibit
6:30–8:30 p.m. Opening exhibit for featured artist Jodi Ohl. Artful Living Group, 112 Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-7822 or www.artfullivinggroup.com.

10/1 Pink Ribbon Cocktail Party
7–10 p.m. Cocktail party with food stations, live entertainment, auction and a spirits wall. Admission: $75. Proceeds benefit The Pink Ribbon Project. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 815-5042 or www.nhrmc.org/pinkribbon.

10/2 Sculptors Exhibition
6–9 p.m. Works by forty artists; part of the annual Tri-State Sculptors Conference. CFCC Wilma W. Daniels Gallery, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7000 or cfcc.edu/blogs/wilmagallery.

10/2 Coastal Birding Cruise
10 a.m. Board the *Shamrock* for a one-hour tour with Captain Joey Abbate. Admission: $25–35. Blockade Runner Beach Resort Dock, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville beach. Info: (910) 509-2838 or www.nccoast.org.

10/2 Garden Party
1–5 p.m. Official opening of Riverfest features open bourbon and cigar bar, fire dancing, food, and live music with Sai Collins and Paleo Sun. Admission: $55. Partial proceeds benefit the beautification of Greenfield Lake. Dr. Heber W. Johnson Rotary Garden, 1940 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonriverfest.com.

10/2–3 Dinner Theater
7 p.m. *We Can Be Heroes*, a story about the Champions of Justice (the world's worst superhero team). Admission: $18–30. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

10/2–4 Fall Book Sale
11 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday); 1–5 p.m. (Sunday). Used books, CDs, and DVDs for adults and children at discounted prices. NE Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6322 or www.nhclibrary.org.

10/2–4 Riverfest
Annual street fair in downtown Wilmington featuring over 200 craft and food vendors, live music, car shows, SUP race, rowing regatta, children's activities, fireworks and more. Free. Riverfront Park, Water Street & Princess Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 452-6862 or www.wilmington-riverfest.com.

10/2–4 Art in the Arboretum
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Twentieth anniversary art show and sale in the gardens. Includes local artist prints, paintings, pottery, sculpture and other media, live music, artist demonstrations, silent auction and raffle. Admission: $5. Proceeds benefit the NHC Arboretum. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive,

Surf Fishing Challenge

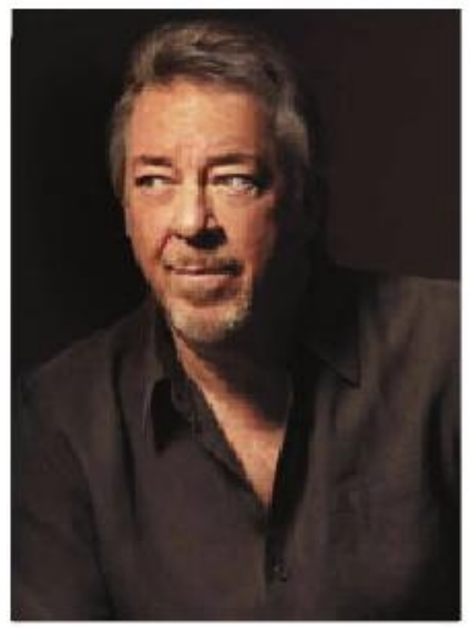
10/16-18

Ukulele Orchestra Concert

10/22

Homestead Dinner

10/23&24



Skaggs in Concert

10/28

Wilmington. Info: (910) 352-8760 or nhcarboretum.com.

10/3 Run for the Ta Tas
8 a.m. 5K "chaser race" that gives girls a head start. First participant to cross the finish line (male or female) wins cash. Admission: $20–45. Proceeds benefit The Pink Ribbon Project, Pretty in Pink Foundation and Love is Bald. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 232-7532 or its-go-time/run-for-the-ta-tas.

10/3 Native Plant Sale
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 2–4 p.m. Joyce Huguelet of Slatestone Gardens and Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be on site with a variety of native plants. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

10/3 Bark in the Park
11 a.m. Mighty mutts and playful purebreds are all welcome at the Skyhound Hyperflite Canine Championships. No experience necessary. Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.towb.org.

10/3 Metropolitan Opera
1–4:15 p.m. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents Verdi's *Il Travatore*, the tale of a heroine who sacrifices her own life for the love of the gypsy troubadour. Educational mini lecture forty-five minutes prior to screening. UNCW Lumina Theater, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195 or uncw.edu/olli.

10/3 Southport Bicycle Tour
3 p.m. Slow-paced bicycle tour through historical downtown Southport. Admission: $20–28. The Adventure Company, 807-A Howe Street, Southport. Info: (910) 454-0607 or www.theadventurecompany.net.

10/3 Opening Gala
6:30 p.m. Opening gala for the CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center includes cocktail reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres, performances by Liza Minnelli and the NC Symphony, and an after party with dancing and desserts. Admission: $225. CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

10/3 & 4 Fall King Challenge
Fall King Mackerel fishing competition where participants have their choice of three piers: Carolina Beach Pier, Kure Beach Pier & Johnny Mercers Pier. Info: (910) 538-0115 or fishermanspost.com.

10/4 Music Discovery
2 p.m. Special story time and musical demos for children featuring Erik Dyke, bassist with the NC Symphony. Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6353 or www.nhclibrary.org.

10/4 Bluewater Waterfront Music
4–7 p.m. Liverpool performs Beatles favorites. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewater-dining.com.

10/4 NC Symphony Concert
7:30 p.m. NC Symphony's inaugural Russian Spectacular concert features works by Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich and Rachmaninoff. Pre-concert talk held at 6:20 p.m. CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (877) 627-6724 or cfcc.edu.

10/4 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. Sonic Spectrum performs funk, rock, pop and soul. Bring blankets and snacks. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkure-beach.org.

10/5 Word Weavers
7–9 p.m. Christian writer's group meeting. Life Point Church, 3534 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910)

619-7344 or sondradron@bellsouth.net.

10/5 & 6 Live Theater
7:30 p.m. NETworks presents Disney's hit Broadway musical *Beauty and the Beast*. Admission: $45–95. CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

10/7 & 21 River Nature Cruise
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Black River excursion narrated by Coastal Ecologist and author Andy Woods. Admission: $40–49.50. Cape Fear Riverboats, 101 South Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1611 or cfrboats.com.

10/9 Raise the Ruff Gala
7 p.m. Fundraiser/celebration hosted by Paws Place featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, live music, auctions, raffles. Admission: $50. Proceeds benefit Paws Place. The Terraces at Sir Tyler, 1826 Sir Tyler Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 845-7297 or www.pawsplace.org/raise-the-ruff.

10/9 Yesterday & Today
7:30 p.m. "Yesterda'y & Today: The Interactive Beatles Experience features Beatles favorites; playlist chosen by the audience. Admission: $22–38. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

10/9 Jazz Funeral
7–9 p.m. The Kure Beach Jazz Funeral mourns the passing of summer with a New Orleans style procession down the Boardwalk followed by a concert at Ocean Front Park by the Dixieland All Stars. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

10/9–11 Live Theater
7 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association Children's Theatre presents *West Side Story*, directed and choreographed by David Loudermilk with music direction by Denice Hopper. Admission: $12. Hannah Block Second Street Stage, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.wilmingtoncommunityarts.org.

10/9–11 Live Theatre
8:30 p.m. The Arts Council of Wilmington presents *Hacked: The Treasure of the Empire*, by Caravan Stage Company. Admission: $10. Port City Marina, 10 Harnett Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artswilmington.org.

10/10 Son Run 5K
8:30 a.m. 5K race takes participants from the Wrightsville Beach Park and Recreation Center on a flat, scenic loop around Wrightsville Beach. Celebration and awards to follow. Admission: $5–30. Proceeds benefit The Carousel Center, A Safe Place, and Methodist Home for Children. Wrightsville Beach Park, 321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 232-7532 or its-go-time.com/son-run.

10/10 Aviation Day & 5K
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. A day of fun at the airport featuring a static aircraft display, tons of food from local eateries, a 5K on the runway, and a kids' area complete with bounce house, face painting and clowns. Includes appearances by the Wilmington Model Flying Club and Sun Coast Cruisers Car Club. Free. International Customs Terminal, Wilmington International Airport, 1740 Airport Boulevard, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-4333 or www.flyilm.com.

10/10 Star Wars Day
10 a.m. Themed games, crafts and activities for kids. Choose a side (the Rebels or the Empire) in the fighter navigation course and get in the spirit by wearing a costume and posing at the photo booth. Free. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6371 or www.nhclibrary.org.

10/10 Native Plant Sale
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Joyce Huguelet of Slatestone Gardens and Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be on site with a variety of native plants. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

10/10 Fall Farm Fest
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fall festival features food, wine, beer, live music, bingo, pony rides, llama cart rides, hayrides, petting zoo, milking demos, hot pepper eating contest and more. Admission varies per activity. Greenlands Farm, 668 Midway Road SE, Bolivia. Info: greenlandsfarmstore.info.

10/10 Amazing Race
11 a.m. Teams race to locate ten mystery destinations throughout New Hanover County, complete challenges at each stop, then race to the finish line. Food and prizes await. Admission: $45–100. Canines for Service, 1200 North Twenty-Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-8181 or www.caninesforservice.org.

10/10 Artsplosion
11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Inaugural event held in the brand new CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center featuring community performance groups, an arts resources fair and courtyard performances by the nationally acclaimed Squonk Opera. Free. CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

10/10 Back Door Kitchen Tour
11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Self-guided tenth anniversary tour featuring nine distinguished kitchens in historic downtown Wilmington. Admission: $15–25. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 398-3723 or www.rowilmington.org.

10/10 Port City Rumble
11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Annual car and bike show hosted by the Maulers Car & Bike Club featuring pre-'70s cars and trucks, traditional hot rods, old school bikes, choppers, bobbers and customs, plus creeper races, pin-up contest and cash prizes. Registration: $15. Princess Street, downtown Wilmington.

10/10 Hidden Battleship
12–4 p.m. Behind-the-scenes tour of unrestored areas of the battleship. The Azalea Coast Radio Club will be in Radio II to explain their work on the ship's radio transmitters. Admission: $45–50. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

10/10 Taste of Wrightsville Beach
5–8 p.m. Celebrate Wrightsville Beach's diverse and delicious fare with more than thirty food, wine and beer tasting booths, plus live music. Admission: $25–100. Proceeds benefit the Wrightsville Beach Foundation. MarineMax, 130 Short Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 620-0281 or wrightsvillebeachfoundation.org.

10/10 Rock Legends
7:30 p.m. An interactive rock concert that lets the audience vote for the music they want to hear. Admission: $22–38. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

10/10 & 11 Blues & Jazz Festival
11 a.m. Live jazz and blues performances on two stages; food and craft vendors; wine garden; kids zone; and special headliners Dr. John and the Nite Trippers and Shemekia Copeland. Admission: $25–60. Ft. Fisher Air Force Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

10/11 Bluewater Waterfront Music
4–7 p.m. Machine Gun performs hard rock hits. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

10/11–17 Paint Out
Plein air painting exhibition and sale hosted by the Arts Council of Wilmington. Both painter and subject must be outdoors; no photography. Event open to any artist using oil, watercolor, acrylic, pastels, pencil or pen and ink. Entry: $30. Painters are prescribed the boundaries of Water Street to Seventeenth Street in downtown Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artswilmington.org.

10/12 Golf & Games Day
9 a.m. – 10 p.m. Join the Good Shepherd Center for a day of golf, plus silent auction, bridge, mah-jongg and more. Dinner included. Proceeds benefit the hungry and homeless. Cape Fear National Golf Course, 1281 Cape Fear National Drive, Leland. Info: (910) 763-4424 or www.goodshepherd-wilmington.org.

10/11 Jazz Brunch
12 p.m. Sunday jazz brunch with Grenoldo Frazier. Admission: $15–20. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

10/12 Parisian Tea
2 p.m. Enjoy an old-fashioned Parisian afternoon tea in the formal parlors of historic Bellamy Mansion. Admission: $37.45. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

10/14 Bird Hike
8 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden at Airlie Gardens for a chance to see some of the garden's 200 species of birds. Admission: $5–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7564 or www.airliegardens.org.

10/14 Page to Stage
6:30–8 p.m. Writers, actors and producers share original works with the community and encourage feedback. This month's theme: "Bad habits and dark secrets." Free. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street,

Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or cameronartmuseum.org.

10/14–18 ARTfall
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. First annual juried art show and sale as part of the ARTblast Festival. Features original works by local artists. Reception and awards presentation on Thursday (10/15) from 6 –8 p.m. Community Arts Center, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.wilmingtoncommunityarts.org.

10/14–18 ARTblast Festival
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Five-day celebration of the arts showcasing theater, film, dance, literature, music and art throughout downtown Wilmington. Info: (216) 374-8884 or www.artblastwilmington.com.

10/15 WHAT Luncheon
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Wilmington Health Access for Teens celebrates its 20th birthday with a luncheon that walks through the history of the organization and includes a panel of prominent local and national health care advocates. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 202-4605 or www.whatswhat.org.

10/15 Vienna Boys Choir
7:30 p.m. Known for performing since the Holy Roman Empire, the Vienna Boys Choir is beloved around the world for its arrangements of Lehar, Lanner and Strauss in addition to the choir's original works. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500.

10/15–18 Live Theatre
8 p.m. City Stage presents the camp classic *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, directed by Nicholas Gray with choreography by Kendra Goehring-Garrett. City Stage, 21 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: www.citystagenc.com.

10/16 Southport Paint-n-Pour
4:30–6:30 p.m. Join artist Kathleen McLeod for a fun, step-by-step art class. Supplies provided; bring your own beverage. No painting experience necessary. Admission: $35. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

10/16 Airlie Oyster Roast
6–10 p.m. Join Airlie Gardens for appetizers, steamed oysters, BBQ, fish fry, cash bar and live entertainment by Heartbeat of Soul & The Sea Pans. Admission: $85. Proceeds benefit environmental education programs. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or airliegardens.org.

10/16 Toast to Life Gala
6:30 p.m. Black-tie fundraiser/celebration featuring cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dessert, dancing and live and silent auctions. Admission: $125. Proceeds benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-3114 or www.facebook.com/MDAToasttoLifeGala.

10/16–18 Surf Fishing Challenge
12 a.m. Fishing challenge sans boat or pier at Carolina Beach and Kure Beach. Cash prizes awarded. Admission: $25–70. Carolina Beach Public Parking Lot, 224 Canal Drive, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 409-8379 or fishermanspost.com/tournaments.

10/17 Combat Mud Run
8 a.m. Military-style mud run featuring a variety of obstacles; optional "Meathead Mile" extension. Admission: $40–75. Proceeds benefit Step Up For Soldiers. National Guard Armory, 2221 Carolina Beach Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 232-7532 or www.stepupforsoldiers.org.

10/17 Cape Fear Heart Walk
8–11 a.m. Three-mile route; rollerblades, bicycles, strollers and dogs welcome. Proceeds benefit the American Heart Association. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-9270 or www.capefearncheartwalk.org.

10/17 Native Plant Festival
9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Local plant festival featuring plant vendors, displays and presentations by local horticulture experts, information booths, seed swap, food trucks, music, kids activities, prizes and giveaways. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7660 or arboretum.nhcgov.com.

10/17 Oakdale Walking Tour
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery with local historian David Rice and Oakdale superintendent Eric Kozen. Admission: $10. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-5682 or oakdalecemetery.org.

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10/17 Fire in the Pines Festival
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Celebration of the importance of fire in the longleaf pine ecosystem with a controlled burn demo, live music, food vendors, animal exhibits, fire truck and helicopter tours, interactive educational activities, face painting, games, crafts, scavenger hunt and an appearance by Smokey Bear. Free. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

10/17 Salty Paws Festival
11 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Live entertainment, arts and crafts, food, music, pet contests, children's activities, raffles, prizes and opportunities to adopt rescue animals. Admission: $7. Proceeds benefit animal rescue. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-7233 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

10/17 Beach2Battleship Triathlon
7:30 a.m. Internationally recognized full and half triathlon that includes a 2.4-mile (1.2-mile) swim across the Banks Channel, 112-mile (56-mile) bike ride through northern Wilmington and a 26.2-mile (13.1-mile) run to the battleship. Banks Channel, Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.beach2battleship.com.

10/17 & 18 NC Oyster Festival
9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Sunday). Annual festival featuring local seafood, live music, arts and crafts vendors, kids activities, oyster stew cook-off, oyster shucking and eating contests, and a shag competition. Admission: $5. 8 East Second Street, Ocean Isle Beach. Info: (910) 754-6644 or www.brunswickcountychamber.org.

10/17 & 18 Autumn with Topsail
7:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Saturday); 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Sunday). Annual fall festival featuring arts and crafts booths, beer and wine garden, boat rides, children's activities, food court and live entertainment by the Jason Lee McKinney Band, North Tower Band and Band of Oz. Admission: $5–8. 720 Channel Boulevard, Topsail Beach. Info: (910) 599-6214 or www.autumnwithtopsail.com.

10/17 YachtVenture
6 p.m. Enjoy dinner and cocktails, a silent auction, raffle, live music by L Shape Lot, and explore a fleet of luxury yachts in a stunning waterfront setting. Admission: $100. Proceeds benefit the Children's Museum of Wilmington. MarineMax, 130 Short Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 254-3534 or www.yachtventure.org.

10/17 & 18 Seafood Festival
11 a.m. – 7 p.m. (Saturday); 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Sunday). Inaugural Wilmington festival featuring fresh North Carolina seafood, live music by the Dubtown Cosmonauts, cooking demos and vendors along the Cape Fear River. Free. Events at Watermark Marina, 4114 River Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 794-5259 or www.wilmingtonseafoodfestival.com.

10/18 Antique Appraisal Fair
1:30–4:30 p.m. Experienced specialty antique appraisers on site. Admission: $7/item; $20/3 items. Proceeds benefit Mother Hubbard's Cupboard and other missions. Grace United Methodist Church, 401 Grace Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-5197.

10/18 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. The Imitations perform beach, soul and rock 'n' roll. Bring blankets and snacks. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

9/16–18 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 12–5 p.m. (Sunday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market includes up-cycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home décor items, salvage pieces, yard and garden décor, jewelry and local honey. Location: 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway, Leland. Info: www.seaglass-salvagemarket.com.

10/19 Greenfield Lake Concert
5:30 p.m. Huka Entertainment presents Warren Haynes and the Ashes & Dust Band live in concert with a special guest performance by Chess Boxer. Admission: $37–41. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: greenfield-lakeamphitheater.com.

10/21 Southport Bird Walk
8:30–9:30 a.m. Bird walk around Southport's beautiful historic district and waterfront. Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

10/21–28 Restaurant Week
Eight-day culinary celebration featuring dozens of restaurants throughout the Port City; prix fixe menus at special prices. No passes or coupons necessary. Info: (910) 791-0688 or www.encorerestaurantweek.com.

10/22 Reverse Raffle
6:30–8:30 p.m. Win prizes including cash, art, gift certificates and gift baskets during a wine and hors d'oeuvres event at historic Bellamy Mansion. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

10/22 Ukulele Orchestra Concert
7:30 p.m. Tukuo, the mini guitar maestros (six men and two women), are known for their jazz interpretations, but they can just as easily switch to Mozart or Fleetwood Mac. Admission: $30.50–32.50. Odell Williamson Auditorium, Brunswick Community College, 50 College Road NW, Bolivia. Info: (910) 755-7416 or www.bccowa.com.

10/22 Harvest Luncheon
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry's annual fall luncheon features guest speakers, live music and a light meal. Free. First Baptist Church Activities Center, 411 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-7563 or warmnc.org.

10/22–25 Golf Tournament
8 a.m. The Landfall Tradition Collegiate Golf Tournament features an eighteen-team field from eleven states and nine conferences; includes five of the top twenty ranked teams. Country Club of Landfall, Dye Course, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-2377 or landfalltradition.com.

10/23 Southport Chirp
9–10 a.m. Informal gathering of bird and birding enthusiasts. Bring your questions, sightings and stories to share with local bird lovers. Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

10/23 Fourth Friday
6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

10/23 Women to Watch Awards
5:30–10 p.m. Tuscan-inspired bash and awards celebration recognizing Encore's "Women to Watch." Includes food, wine, beer, awards ceremony, music and dancing. Admission: $40/person. Union Station, 5th Floor, 502 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: www.wilmingtonbiz.com.

10/23 Greenfield Lake Concert
6 p.m. The Penguin and Huka Entertainment present an evening with ALO, the genre-less, high-energy band from California. New Orleans Pop Punk band Yojimbo opens. Admission: $22–27. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

10/23 Voracious Rare Beer Festival
6–9 p.m. Board the Battleship for a tasting of over fifty unique beers along with light appetizers and live music. Brewers will be on hand to answer questions. Admission: $75. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-8622 or www.battleshipnc.com.

10/23 Opening Art Reception
6–9 p.m. Opening reception for the Paste, Paper, Scissors exhibition presented by the Collage Artists of Wilmington. The ACES Gallery, 221 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 274-4788.

10/23 Dance Theater
7:30 p.m. Dusan Tynek has been hailed for his sophisticated movement invention, ingenious use of space, and ability to convey emotion and atmosphere through an original dance vocabulary that bonds classical and modern techniques. Admission: $18–32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalian-hall.org.

10/23 & 24 Homestead Dinner
5–8:30 p.m. A farm-to-fork experience with a five-course gourmet dinner. Evening includes hors d'oeuvres, dessert and a farm tour. Wines are specially selected to complement the meal at additional cost. Reservations required. Greenlands Farm, 668 Midway Road SE, Bolivia. Info: (910) 253-7934 or greenlandsfarmstore.info.

10/24 College Day Program
9 a.m. The College of Arts & Sciences invites the community to come to college for a day. Attend four classes and chat with professors. Includes mid-day lunch break. Admission: $35–45. UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195 or www.uncw.edu/olli.

10/24 Scrap & Design
9 a.m. – 9 p.m. The Scrappers get together once a month, donate $20 each to Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry and spend the day scrapbooking and crafting. Each session includes a special

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make-and-take project. Admission: $20 (donation). Scrap & Design, Judges Road Event Center, 311 Judges Road, Unit 2B, Wilmington. Info: (910) 470-2532 or scrapbook@warmnc.org.

10/24 Owl Program
9:15–10:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden's Dave Weesner for a free program about owls and learn about their habitats, hunting techniques, behaviors, and more. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

10/24 Trunk or Treat
1 p.m. Fall event hosted by the VFW Post 2573 Ladies Auxiliary featuring a classic car show and competition voted on by attendees, pony rides, pumpkin painting and raffles. Costumes encouraged. Admission: $3. VFW Post 2573, 2722 Carolina Beach Road, Wilmington. Info: (410) 321-1741.

10/24 Beer & Wine Festival
1–5 p.m. The Lighthouse Beer & Wine Festival features over 150 craft breweries and wineries with over 300 samplings, live music, food trucks, vendors and more. Admission: $13–75. Battleship Park, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-8622 or www.lighthousebeerandwine.com.

10/24 Launch Party
2 p.m. Launch party for *27 Views of Wilmington*; includes fast-paced "27 Views slam" and signing. Books available for purchase. Pomegranate Books, 4418 Park Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 452-1107 or www.pombooks.net.

10/24 All Hallows Masquerade
7 p.m. – 12 a.m. Poplar Grove Plantation opens up its parlors for the Haint Blue All Hallows Masquerade in the Manor House courtyards. Includes oyster bar, open bar, costume contest and live music by the Phantom Playboys. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

10/24 Symphony Concert
7:30 p.m. Guest artist Fabian Lopez performs Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2, the best known of Prokofiev's violin works, and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 (Pathetique), which he conducted nine days before his death. Admission: $6–27. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.wilmington-symphony.org.

10/24 Haunted Library
6–9 p.m. Storytelling festival for kids featuring spooky activities, scary tales, a haunted house and library labyrinth. Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6393 or www.nhclibrary.org.

10/24 Womanless Beauty Pageant
8 p.m. Fundraising event for Opera House Theatre Company featuring men in drag. All contestants compete in evening gown and talent, and the top five compete in an interview. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-4234 or www.operahousetheatrecompany.net.

10/27 Batty's Halloween Bash
5:30–8 p.m. Trick-or-treat aboard Battleship North Carolina and enjoy kids' activities, games, henna tattoos and storytelling. Costumes encouraged. Admission: $5. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

10/28 Boz Skaggs in Concert
7:30 p.m. Rock legend Boz Skaggs began his career in the 1960s with The Steve Miller Band. See him live. Admission: $40–99. CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center, 200 Hanover Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or cfcc.edu.

10/28–30 Trick-or-Treat Under the Sea
4:30–8 p.m. Family-friendly Halloween event featuring indoor trick-or-treating, storytelling, magic show, spooky scuba divers, face painting and haunted gardens. Admission: $11. NC Aquarium at Ft. Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8257 or www.ncaquariums.com.

10/29 Day of the Dead Crafts
3:30 p.m. A chance for kids ages 5 to 9 to learn about Mexican traditions while creating ornamental skull masks, marigold necklaces, boutonnieres and papel picado banners. Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6303 or www.nhclibrary.org.

10/30 & 31 Halloween Movie Night
6:30 p.m. *Labyrinth* (PG) at 7 p.m. and *Cape Fear* (R) at 9 p.m. Blankets, chairs and coolers permitted; candy, popcorn, beer and wine available for purchase. Admission: $5. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

10/30–11/8 Fair & Expo
5–11 p.m. (Monday – Thursday); 5 p.m. – 12 a.m. (Friday); 12 p.m. – 12 a.m. (Saturday); 1–11 p.m. (Sunday). Live entertainment and family fun plus rides, games, shows, livestock exhibits, commercial booths, agricultural tents, judged competitions, delicious food and more. Admission: $20. Wilmington National Airport, 1740 Airport Boulevard, Wilmington. Info: (910) 313-1234 or www.capefearfair.com.

10/31 Spooky Sound Paddle-Fest
8:30–11:30 a.m. Family-oriented Halloween paddle boarding event featuring a non-competitive race including stand-up paddle boards, canoes, kayaks, and other non-motorized water craft. The course will be 1.5-miles long with demos and clinics prior to the race. Costumes encouraged; prizes awarded for "best costume" and "strangest water craft." Admission: $15. Wrightsville SUP, West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 791-9262.

10/31 Gourmet Sale
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. The Ministering Circle of Wilmington celebrates 126 years of service with its annual fall gourmet sale. Find relishes, pickles, baked goods, and specialty dishes. Proceeds support non-profits and scholarships with a healthcare focus. Elks Club, 5102 Oleander Drive, Wilmington.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday – Wednesday Cinematique
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check website for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday Wine Tasting
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of the historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, landscaping and bedding plants, herbs, baked goods and the best in handmade art and craft items. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Wednesday T'ai Chi at CAM
12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Thursday Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday Haint Blue Ghost Tours
7/8/9 p.m. Thirty-fifth year anniversary celebrating unity in diversity with stylized Haint Blue Ghost Tours in the Gullah Geechee and Southern Gothic traditions. Tours start on 10/9. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

Friday–Sunday Fall Festival
6–11 p.m. (Friday); 1–11 p.m. (Saturday); 1–6 p.m. (Sunday). Fall festival featuring a corn maze shaped like North Carolina, hay rides, farm animals, human foosball, giant slides, laser tag, toddler town, barrel train, live entertainment and more. Hubb's Corn Maze, 10444 US Highway 421 North, Clinton. Info: (910) 564-6709 or www.hubbscornmaze.com.

Saturday Riverfront Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowtown.com/events/farmers-market.

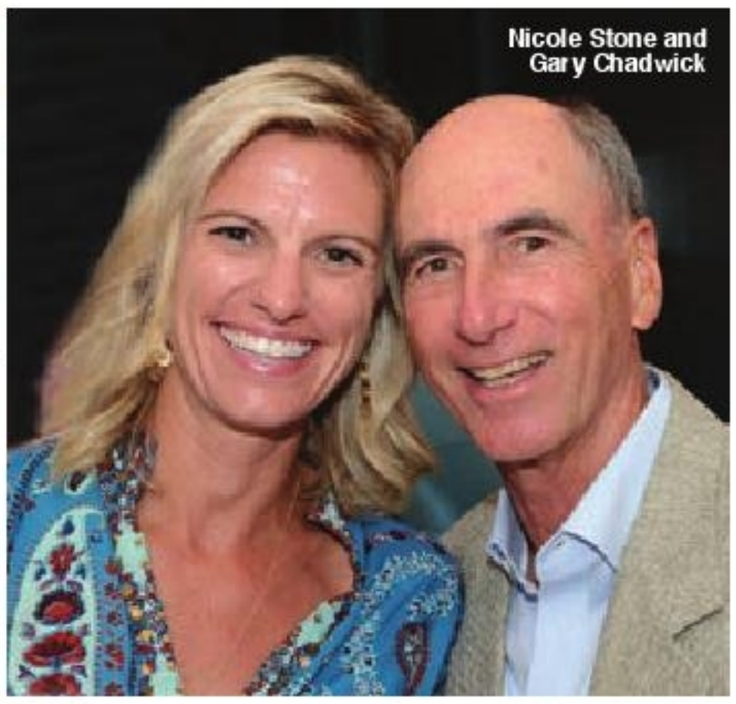
To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

Port City People

Pipeline to a Cure
Cystic Fibrosus Foundation
Country Club of Landfall
Saturday, August 8, 2015
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Andrew & Melissa Fallis, Lile & Tatham Stevens

Shona Martin and Steve Wells


Nicole Stone and Gary Chadwick

Martha & Stephen Harlan

Aaron Rico and Melanie Akin

Don Bullard, Sunny Lee and John Ridenhour

Bonnie Yankaskas, Pete & Jane Hexter

Stephanie & Steve Whitehead

Sandy Spiers, Sharon Laney, Tim Milam, Nan Graham, Elizabeth Singletary

Shelly Bangert, Amy Sweyer

Samantha, Wyatt, Chris Wilhoit

Ty & Becky Frederick

Port City People

Landfall Foundation Art Show & Sale

Juried Awards and Preview Party

Saturday, August 19, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Greta Swaim

Peggy Vineyard (Best in Category)

John Balance

Aundrea Wilson, Erika Lawrence

Joanne Geisel (Honorable Mention)

Zero Hartline (Best in Category)

Jessica Schreiber, Kristen Harmon

Alice Ray Cathrall, Tammy Darazsdi, Martha Edgerton

Lynn Hildreth, Jackie Darazsdi, Jessica Spencer

Lisa Lightfoot

Karen Lee Crenshaw (Best in Category)

Roslyn Hancock (Best in Category)

Cathy Johnson (Best in Category)

Port City People

Last Chance for White Pants Gala

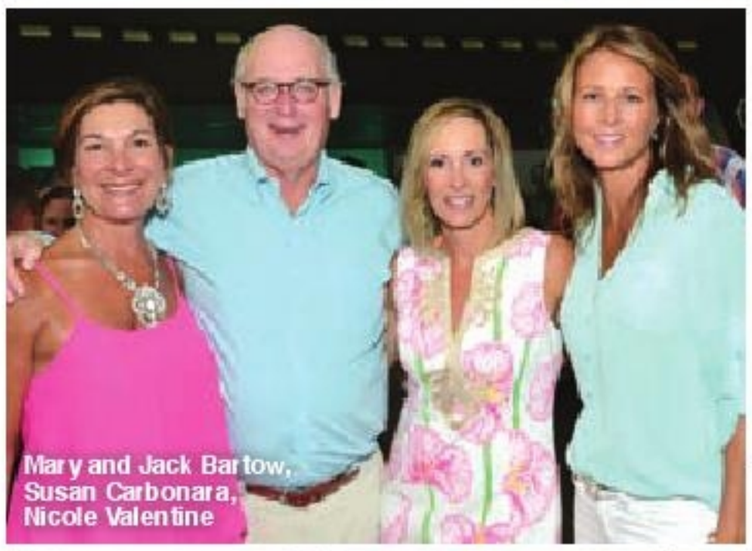
Benefitting Cape Fear Hospice

Tuesday, August 29, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Rob Beale, Steve Cosentino, Sarah Staroba

Zack Dunn, Jason & Carly Forman, Matt Jordan



Mary and Jack Bartow, Susan Carbonara, Nicole Valentine

Betsy Davis, Holly West, Kathy Gresham, Margaret Gresham

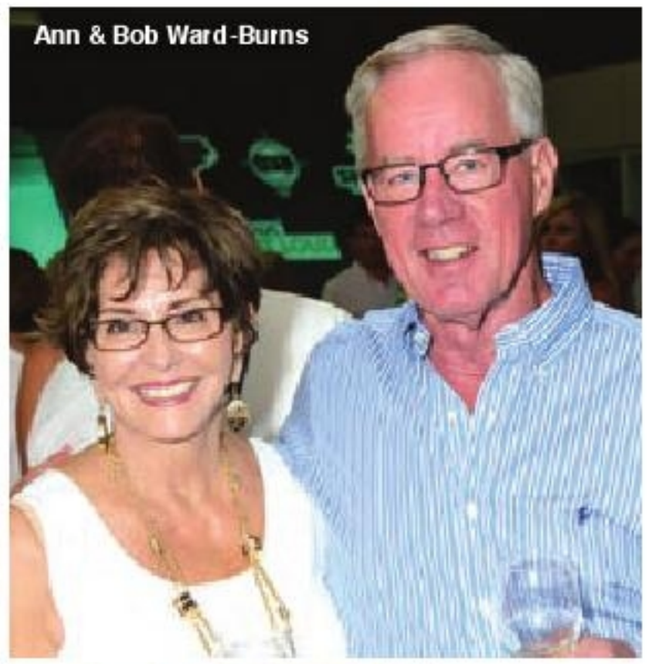
Leigh & Jim Morton, Kelly & Bryan Thomas

Dana Fisher, Melisa Gallison, Clayton Gsell, Peggy O'Leary, Monica Perkins

Ashley Miller, Albert & Paula Corbett, Lindsey Bush, Cathey Luna

Richard & Monika Williams, Sandy Spiers

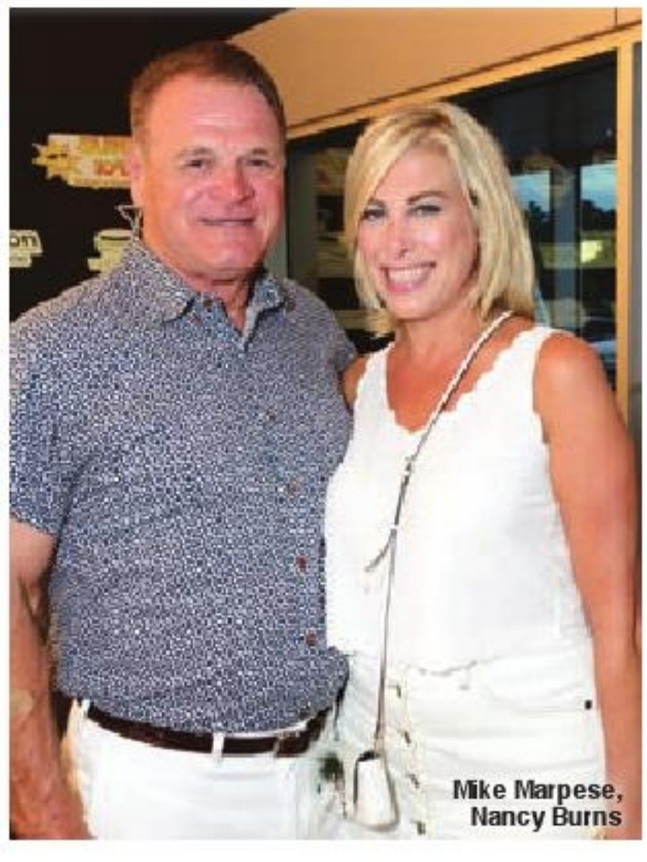
Wendy Hunt, Maureen Mountcastle, Ashley Robbins



Ann & Bob Ward-Burns

Matt & Denise Lopatka

Sharon Laney, Steve Grafton



Mike Marpese, Nancy Burns

Port City People

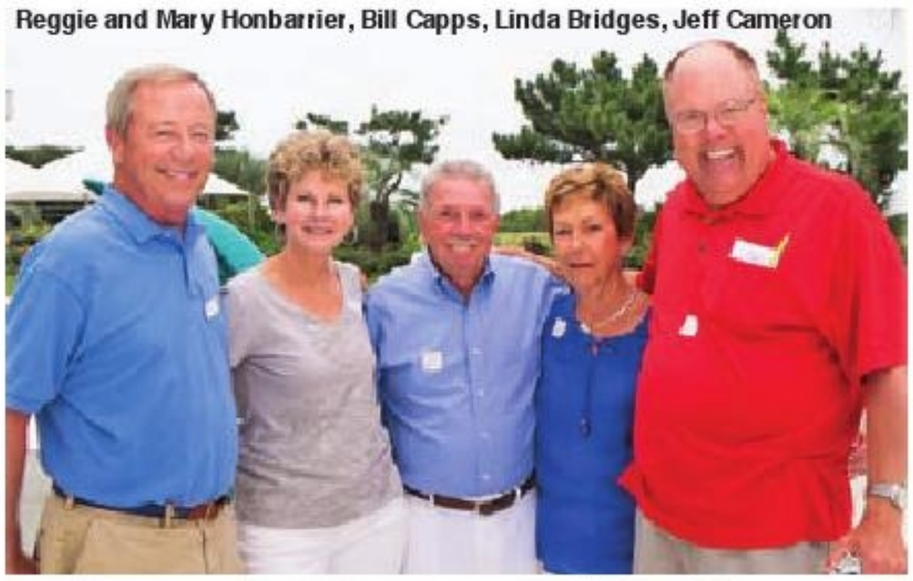
19th Lumina Daze at Wrightsville Beach

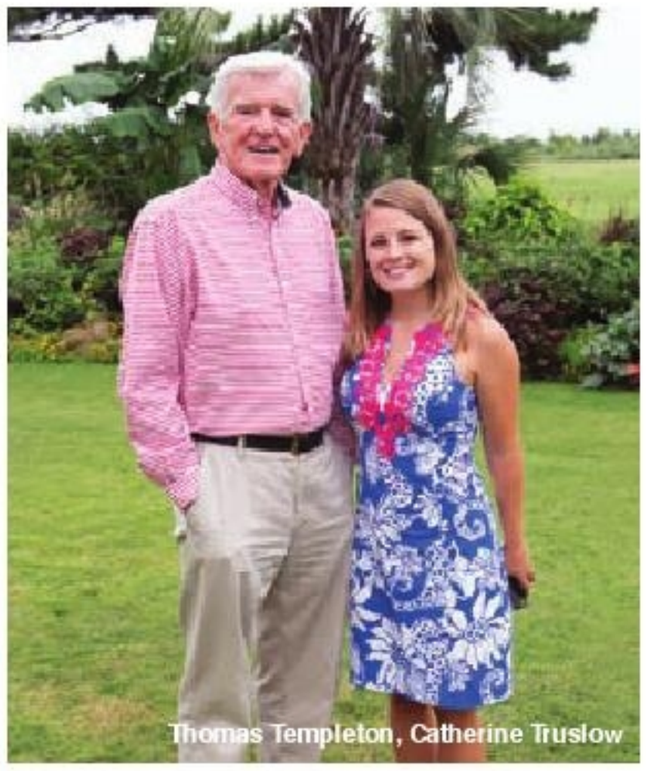
Blockade Runner

Sunday, August 30, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Andrew, Olivia, Elijah, and Sarah Walden


Reggie and Mary Honbarrier, Bill Capps, Linda Bridges, Jeff Cameron


Thomas Templeton, Catherine Truslow

Mary Baggette, Betty Brown, Barbara Bear Jamison, Jennny McKinnon Wright

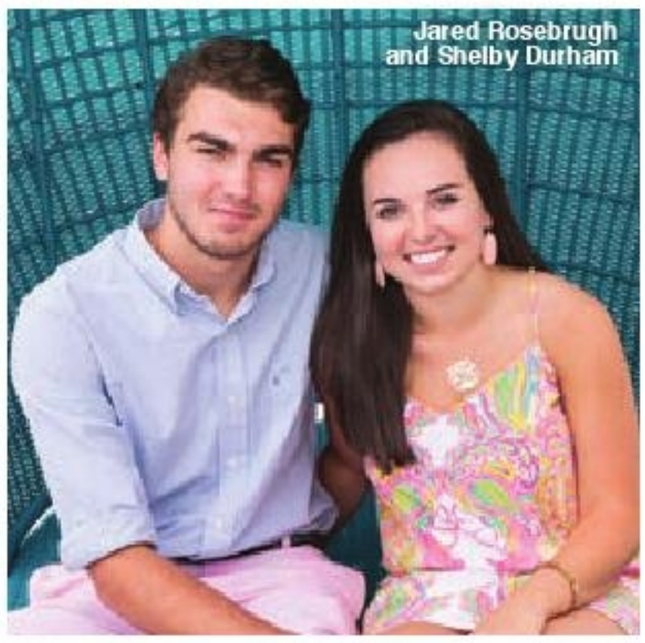
Rich Malfa, Joe Partin, Mark Steelman

Kathy Sledge, John Sideris

Chip & Linda Jordan, Jack Lane

Zeke Partin, Rosalie Howell, Sandy Malfa, Diane Moore Steelman

Alex & Anna Pridgen, Gena McKinley


Jared Rosebrugh and Shelby Durham

Michelle & Dr. Jeff Coleman, Diane & Bill Howard

Joshua Youse, Erin Rhyne, Elissa Moleovn, Lisa Sherrill

Betty Brown and Jodie Rippy

Port City People

Great Gatsby Gala

City Club ofWilmington

Saturday, September 5, 2015

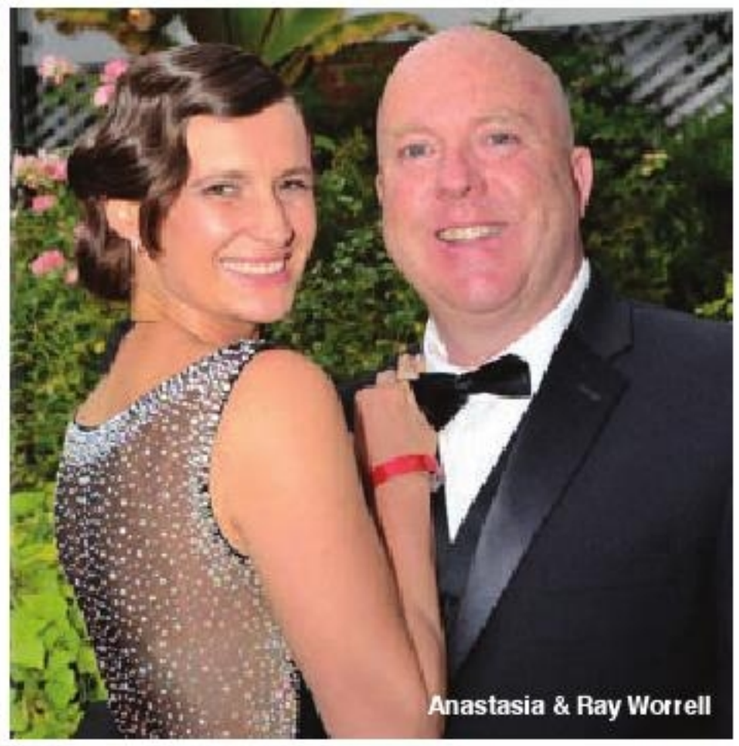
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Steve & Shea Sims

Alex Gale, Tracy Hieronymous

Jack Saunders, Corinne Caputo

Elizabeth Mills, Robert Epstein


Anastasia & Ray Worrell

Abby Myers, Marcus Schroeder, Heather Evans

Mark Smith, Max & Ashlee Balena, Kendall Fuqua, Jennifer Paulding, Jon Mitchell

Caitlin Hoffman, Nate Moore Erin & Neil Firth

Marcus & Jessica Conklin

Rebecca Shipe, Chad Clark, Kelsey Kassonie

Karolina & Alex Petty

Karolina& Mac Pora

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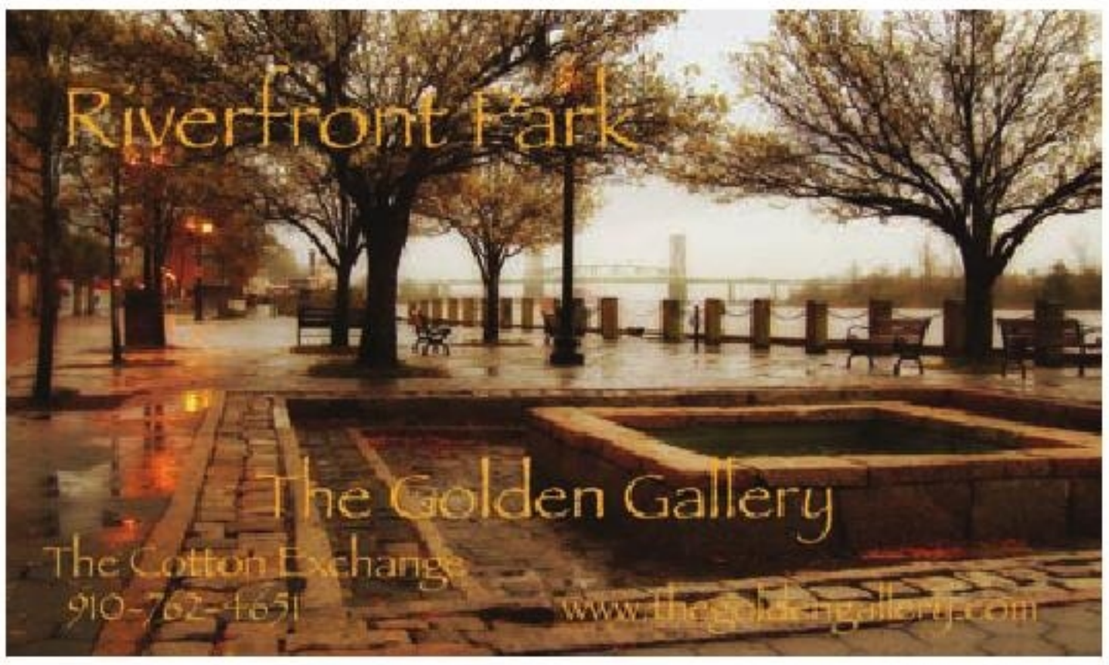

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2, 3	Wilmington Christian Academy

Astral Candy

You know about the Death Clock?
Lordamercy, Astrid here just discovered it online

By Astrid Stellanova

Well, Star Children, looks like I'm clocking out, so to speak, on April 3, 2040! Only twenty-five more years before I depart from Curl Up and Dye feet first. But at least that gives me enough time to perfect my red balayage, figure out what essentials to tote around in my purse, and find just the right shoes for the Sweet Hereafter. When the end comes, I, for one, don't plan to be caught off guard. Ad astra.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
While your tippy-top favorite won't come wrapped in a box, you are getting some fine birthday prezzies. Health, happiness and even financial reward are yours in October, ripe on the vine and ready for picking. I don't know if you have visited the fountain of love lately, but when you do, drink deeply, Sweet Thing. (A caution: One prezzie could be a real stumper, cause one of your favorite people tries their hardest but miscalculates every dang time. You are not as practical as they reckon, but spare their feelings and tell them you just want a car wash or a back rub this year.) You won't have much to holler about this coming year, so chill out. And don't keep declaring you hate birthday cake, either — you know that ain't exactly true. You just hate all them candles flaring away like a torch.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
That little escapade last month got you into a whole lot more trouble than you expected. When the whole silly thing shakes out, you are going to discover that somebody has a thing for Hot Little You and part of the drama was attention seeking and getting. And they ain't going away, either, even if you want 'em to in the worst way. This don't mean they are crazy enough to boil the bunny, or not quite, but they are going to make for more mischief and the drama ain't over yet. Remember this the next time you make the 30 Proof Punch for the company party.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
The fact of the matter is, you expected a whole lot of sugar for one small dime, as Grandpa Hornblower used to say. I don't know what gets you so wound up when it comes to spending a little money, but we ain't in the Depression years. Loosen up that wallet, Honey. Time to get real. When you get back to Earth, consider leaving quarters in the vending machine just to surprise somebody and be nice. Little things count. Nice counts. Money ain't all that matters.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
Life took the starch out of your shirt in a public way; somebody said something you didn't deserve and it hurt. Here's what Astrid wants you to do: absolutely nothing. Get on with your head up high and just wait. By the middle of this month, you are going to experience one of the best days of your life. Ever. Nothing that happened before is going to matter. Life is going to take you onto a journey into fabulosity.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
In the first week of this month you have a particularly challenging conversation. The person you meant to reach may act as if they didn't hear a word you said but they ain't as deaf as they seem. Go about your business and wait; they are going to have a personal epiphany, and you get to enjoy the best aspect of that. Being around somebody you love, who finds a little happiness of their own, is something we all want. Also, Honey, you have forgotten something that you simply ain't going to believe.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Carrying around a delicious little secret is like winking in the dark. Nobody but you knows, and it is innocent little fun. Your secret concerns a special someone who is in your hip pocket. They are slowly realizing what you knew all along: You are good medicine for them, and a sweet tonic. And they are going to just love taking the cure.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
Sometimes I cannot wait to see what is coming next for the Ram. Whatever it is, it ain't boring. This month, the danger is, you will have a dry spell when it comes to excitement. This is a prescription for Aries trouble. Do not go online and buy, book, sell, rent, smell, smoke, sniff or comment on something that you think is dangerous, endangered, explosive or indicting. If you need something to restrain that impulse and hold you back, visit your local slammer and see how much you think you would like bunking in there.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
Your vacation was not the huge success you hoped it would be, but some of that is because of your gawdawful need to control people. You would even try to direct the show at Sea World if you were sitting in the audience watching a dolphin for the first time and had never been in water above your knees. Life might be a little easier for everybody around you if you could just shut up and enjoy the show. Seriously.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
The salesman needed to sell that luminous pea-green car; they flattered you into thinking it was going to make you stand out from the crowd and you bought it. Now it's in the garage gleaming like a glow worm and you have buyer's remorse. OK, maybe it wasn't a car, but you get the idea. Flattery is your weak spot; for the love of split pea soup, don't let it get the best of you this month. Could cost you dearly.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
This is one of those months that you find yourself on idle, waiting for the Next Big Thing. Maybe your destiny is in discovering the beauty of the Next Small Thing. A waitress smiles and calls you Sugar. A child blows you a kiss as you leave. Either it all matters, or nothing matters. And pay it back. If you do that, good karma comes rolling right back and your heart is fuller, lighter and bigger.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
You keep smiling as if all is just fine and dandy, but inside you are doing a slow burn. Nobody knows you all that well, and that is exactly how you have been determined to keep things. But the truth is, it is causing you a lot of unnecessary pain and loneliness. Holding onto mystery is just one way to be holding onto lonely, Sugar. Don't nobody want that.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
If everybody found as much personal excitement as you do in a trip to Walmart, the world would be a better place. This has been a year where you find your groove wherever you are, whatever you are doing. The thing is, Nirvana ain't on aisle 5. But it is right here, right now. And you are as close to finding your bliss as you ever hoped to be. But don't waste your star power on trying to perfect the art of the email.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Time to Really Learn

And, just maybe, rethink traditional End of Grade student assessments

By Clyde Edgerton

Up front: School teachers and administrators are, along with other public servants, like public safety officers, under-appreciated because of many complex factors. In this essay I dip into one important aspect of public education.

At the end of school last year I served as a monitor in a public school classroom where an EOG (End of Grade) assessment was taking place. During the three hours of testing, while the room was so quiet you could hear a charger cord land on a feather pillow, I decided to silence my iPhone so that the vibration noise, in case of a call, wouldn't be disturbing. In the process, just to make sure all was quiet, I touched the ringer volume indicator in order to silence it. I didn't know that my touch would set it off. It's a motorcycle sound on my phone — and I managed to cover it up with rapid-fire, fake coughs, though a few students turned and stared at me. But then, in the process of trying to shut the whole phone down, I held my home screen button down too long and came up with Siri, my iPhone voice. Into the very serious quiet of the classroom, with no prompting from me, she *shouted*, "WHAT CAN I HELP YOU WITH?"

The teacher stepped to the door, talked to someone, and in about five minutes the principal peeped in and asked me for my cellphone. I handed it over, visibly shaken.

Throughout the time of testing, after my "visibly shaken" episode, I felt like I was in a kind of make-believe world, and I'm confident that many students (and teachers) feel that their EOG testing time is somehow very disconnected from their everyday lives. Yet everyday life and problems, and being inspired to learn, is what we tend to hope education is all about.

These EOGs happen at the end of the year all across North Carolina and the United States. If you have children in public schools, you know a good bit about EOGs and probably have an opinion about them. If you don't have children or grandchildren in public schools, the term "EOGs" may be new to you.

The administration of these tests costs about $15 billion a year in the U.S., six to seven hundred million dollars in North Carolina. That would average out to six or seven million dollars per year per North Carolina county.

If I were a college student today — looking for a money-making career — I might consider the exciting test-making profession rather than, say, law or medicine.

Some of you reading this essay learned math in such a way that made you dislike the study of it and then, as soon as possible, avoid the study of it. What if we spent half of that EOG money on finding out how to better organize schools and classrooms so that students are more likely to enjoy learning?

Individual public schools get a public grade (A, B, C, D, F) on their EOG performance. This information goes in newspapers and brings great comfort to people connected to high-scoring schools. It's bad news for low-scorers. It's kind of like basketball. High scores win, low scores lose. Low scores can bring punishment to teachers and administrators.

What students know about what's on those tests becomes all-important.

Mandates to use EOG testing (and how to use it) come from our lawmakers. Some educators and lawmakers don't like EOGs, some do, and some are in-between. Teachers aren't allowed to make decisions about whether or not, or how, EOGs could be useful in their classrooms.

During EOG preparation, students learn strategies about how to take a multiple-choice test (first, mark the answers that are clearly wrong; if you haven't marked a "b" lately, and you don't know the answer to a question, then "b" might be your best choice; etc.). That way you are likely to make a higher grade than if you don't learn how to take those tests.

Think of the number of times you have taken a multiple-choice test in the last year:

a) 4
b) 3
c) 2
d) 0

If the answer is d, do you sense a possible problem in our preparation of students for adulthood?

I'm suggesting that in our changing world, students no longer get knowledge from teachers as they did in the old days. Knowledge is now available to students and anybody else through the digital world — YouTube, video, streaming, music, iPods, podcasts, TV. The role of the teacher is transitioning into something like this: designer and organizer of student work — so that students want to learn the important stuff on their own.

As a culture, we show, through our emphasis on testing, that we believe *what students know and don't know that is on certain written tests* comes first. I'm suggesting that *creating student work that leads to life-long learning habits* be seriously considered as an alternative. Tedious and boring testing that is unrelated to students' interests and needs leaves an unquenched thirst for knowledge.

Teachers are guides. Schools are organized in ways that help and/or get in the way of teacher guidance.

Rather than my continuing to harp (sorry) on these things, I will send you (if you are interested) to a source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=15rs4y4PvKE. This link comes from the Schlechty Center website. I highly recommend it if you are interested in how students learn and how schools, classrooms, parents, peers, community citizens, school boards, administrators, politicians, legislators, community leaders and teachers influence how students feel about what happens to them everyday in schools.

Maybe some classrooms need more cellphone noises rather than none.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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